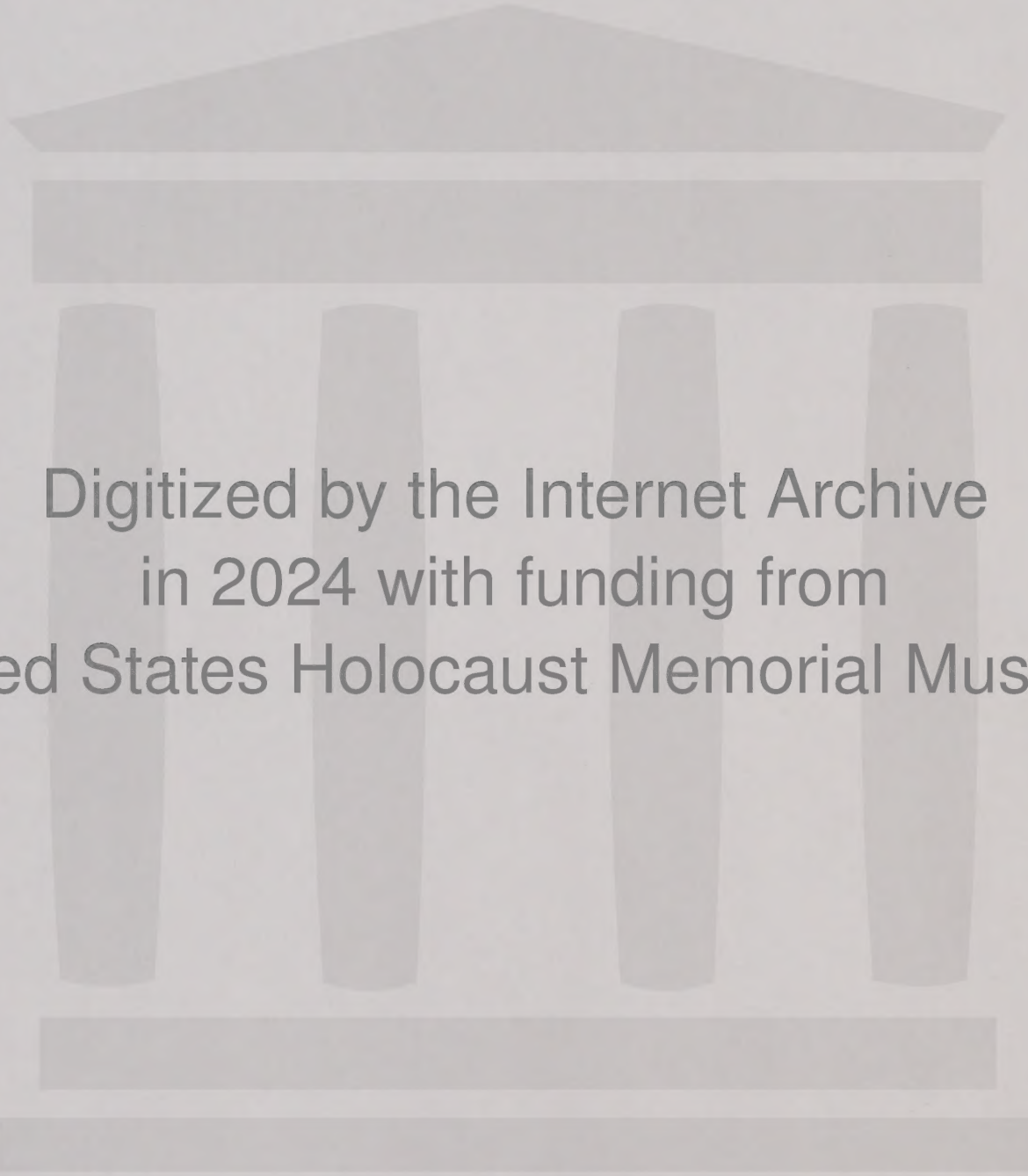




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ESCAPING EUROPE, 1940

From the Diary of a 15-Year Old

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CONTENTS

1. The Flight	1
2. Frankfurt, 1938	5
3. Strasbourg – Thann – Strasbourg	14
4. The Outbreak of War	21
5. Vaucresson	25
6. Visas	35
7. More Black Days	46
8. The Flight (continued)	54
9. Crossing the Spanish Border – Twice	58
10. Stowaways	65
11. Papa	71

1. The Flight

Entry in Ernest Stock's Diary for June 13, 1940

"This day brought about a turning point in our life. We left everything behind and rode, with a knapsack and a small valise, into the unknown. In the morning I bought a man's bike for Charlotte for 150 francs, with the intention of lowering the saddle. Mme. Reiss loaded the most necessary things for herself and the boys on two wobbly baby carriages, and at one o'clock the sad journey began. For a long time I couldn't decide whether we should travel by ourselves or together with them; then I resolved not to leave them.

"We were barely 500 meters from the house when a terrible cloudburst broke loose. The boys had left their coats behind, and Mme. Reiss asked us to ride back to the house to get them. When we returned - after having waited in the house for the rain to end - we did not find a trace of the group (two neighboring families had also come along). We looked for them for another half hour, then brought back the coats, ate something and rode off by ourselves. Lotte could not ride on her bicycle, so we took that of the oldest Reiss boy instead. We rode southward until about 7 o'clock, then the stream of refugees became so dense that we had to push the bikes. At 10 o'clock we lay down in the grass, wrapped ourselves in our coats and slept, although quite badly."

When we awoke at 4 a.m. it was June 14, the day a well-known historian described, because of the German entry into Paris, as Europe's most fateful date in this century. For the two of us the day was almost disastrous: I got separated from Lotte in the surging crowd on the road, and for a while thought I'd lost her for good. Just how it happened I don't recall (neither does she); all I remember is that I found myself on the bike coasting down a hill, all the time picking up speed. When I came to the bottom, I realized I was alone. I stopped and got off the bike; the others swept past me. Once again, I remembered how I had promised Mother to watch over my sister

Lotte, and I felt like crying. But I couldn't afford to let my eyes cloud up; I had to keep looking out for her so that I wouldn't miss her if she came by. With each passing minute – and the hundreds of refugees passing by with it – I became more desperate. What would she do by herself? I tried to stop people to ask if they'd seen her, but they paid no attention. Everyone was in a rush to get on. I didn't know whether to join the stream myself and look for her down the road, or to stay where I was in the hope she might still come by. I chose the latter course, standing by the side of the road with my eyes peeled on the never-ending flow. To my immense relief I saw her coming down the hill, pushing her bike. She had not dared ride on it; the hill was too steep and the brakes felt unsafe. She did not seem too upset, being sure I was waiting for her at the bottom. I again felt like crying, but held back because of Lotte.

I'll quote from the diary again to tell about the remains of this "fateful date":

Friday, June 14. ...At about 2 we got to Etampes, where the Germans had bombed three hours earlier. Dead bodies were lying around, covered with a cloth, wrecked trucks, etc. At the station people were gathering and saying a train would be leaving for Orléans. Sure enough, we were able to climb aboard a freight train, but on the cruel condition that we must leave our bikes behind in the station. All that money lost! The train travelled terribly slowly, stood still for hours on end, and we had to spend the night on it. This was dreadful, because German planes flew overhead all the time, and we expected to get a bomb on our heads any minute. A freight car just behind ours was loaded with explosives.

About noon we got to Orléans, but the train stopped so long a few kilometers from the station that we decided to get out and walk to the station, where we hoped to find another train. It was broiling hot, and I thought any minute I'd collapse under the heavy load. There were another two men with us, but they were carrying heavy burdens themselves. I cursed myself for having given up the bikes. We picked cherries off a tree and bought a few groceries. Almost every place was deserted; the next day there was heavy fighting here. Completely exhausted we arrived at the station, where we got on a

freight train loaded with soldiers and refugees. It left soon enough, but stopped at every crossing to pick up more unfortunates. In the evening we arrived in Vierzon; on another track there was an express train. We got on it, it didn't go any faster, but we were in a second class compartment....

Even though the compartment was full, those in it were willing to make room for two more children. But then there was a tense moment. After the train started moving, Lotte began speaking to me with the German accent she had not managed to get rid of since arriving in France. The chatter in the compartment died down; the people who had been so friendly before suddenly became suspicious. Where are you from, they wanted to know. All Frenchmen had been warned there were German spies everywhere; could they be disguised as children?

"We're from Alsace," I said. "We're on our way to an aunt in Clermont-Ferrand." The whole compartment breathed easier. Everyone knew that Alsatians spoke French with a German accent. We gratefully took the chocolate they offered to us, but I still signalled Lotte to keep her mouth shut.

The fortunate fact that I myself spoke French without an accent I owed - I think - to my language teacher at the *Philanthropin*, the Jewish community school I attended in Frankfurt. Waro (a nickname made up of the first syllables of his name, Walter Rothschild) who taught us ten-year-olds both English and French, put great emphasis on pronunciation. The idea was to prepare us for emigration, meaning for real-life situations where the niceties of grammar were less important than making oneself understood. He would work with each of us individually, standing patiently by the boy's side while he tried again and again, until at last the correct sound emerged. This he did in both languages. I recall the particular care with which he made us pronounce the English "R", which has few equivalents in other languages and certainly not in German. He had each of us first enunciate the French "J" and then roll the tongue slowly

backward along the roof of the mouth, so that an effortless transition sound resulted. Classmates whom I later came across in the United States all spoke an accent-free English, unlike Henry Kissinger, for example, whose high-school teacher was evidently not privy to Waro's technique.

But now we were still in France, my silent sister and I, in a crowded compartment on the way to Mme. Salomon in Clermont-Ferrand. The lights dimmed down, and the rhythm of the wheels seemed to lull everyone to sleep. Everyone except for myself. For the first time since we left the Reiss house in Vaucresson, I had time to think about what had happened to the two of us and of what might lie ahead.

2. Frankfurt, 1938

It was my mother, who had herself kept a journal of my childhood from the day I was born, who had suggested that I keep a diary. In fact, my first entry, dated February 25, 1940, reads that "in Mutti's letters, which Papa sent me today, she wishes that I make a few notations." Until then, I had used the calendar supplied by the Felix Potin grocery chain to keep track of my daily receipts and expenditures, and also to keep a record of the letters I sent and received. From that date on I used the same calendar also to sum up and reflect on the day's events. There were about a dozen lines on each page provided for that purpose, but often there was so much to report that my handwriting spilled over into the margins.

I am still grateful to mother for her suggestion; the diary is in front of me now, the ink a bit pale but still clearly legible, and it helps me recall the time in Vaucresson and the flight southward in great detail.. Mutti's purpose in asking me to keep a diary was to let her and Papa share, later on, our experiences during the separation, which she was sure then would soon come to an end..

But how did our little family of four get split up into three parts in the first place – Papa in Holland, children in France, and Mutti left behind by herself in Germany?

It all began with the infamous *Kristallnacht* (Crystal Night) – which should really be called Pogrom Night - on November 9-10, 1938. At two in the morning, Nazi Storm Troopers came to our house to arrest Papa and send him off, along with thousands of others, to an unknown destination. Luckily, the three of us knew already two days later that he was alive and relatively well , while other distraught families were left without word of their men.. Papa had managed to drop a postcard through a toilet bowl of the train that was taking him to the camp, in the hope that someone would find it on the tracks and put it in the mail. This is exactly what

happened: soiled but legible, the card was delivered to our mailbox with the unfailing efficiency of the German postal system.

The next evening there was a long distance telephone call for Mutti. On the line was Rosa Schweber, calling from France. She was the mother of Karlheinz, who had been my best friend in school until he emigrated with his parents a year earlier. The Schwebers now lived in Thann, a small town in Alsace, where Karlheinz' father worked as a food engineer in a bouillon factory. Rose Schweber knew my mother casually, the way mothers of school friends know one another. Once she had invited our family to eat in the kosher restaurant which she ran on the *Weserstrasse*, near the railroad station. She was an excellent cook, but more than the meal she served us, I remember the shiny white table cloths which gave the rather bare dining room a festive atmosphere. Until then I had seen the tables mostly from below, as Karlheinz and I liked to race the toy cars on the floor between meal times.

Now Rosa Schweber told Mutti on the phone that she and her husband had decided to invite me to join them in Thann.

My mother hesitated. Rosa Schweber told her to think about it and let her know. Then, wavering, my mother said something about not wanting to stay alone with Lotte, my ten-year-old sister. Rosa Schweber did not hesitate. She told Mutti to send Lotte along.

Mutti later told me that the decision to let us leave for France was the hardest she ever had to make. And indeed, when Papa was later released from the concentration camp his first question, on finding the house strangely quiet, had been: "where are the children?" I still don't know whether he approved of Mutti's decision, but it meant that he was not to see his son and daughter again for nearly seven years.

But at the time he had no choice but to accept the reality. As for myself, I not only approved, but begged my mother, while she was still hesitating, to let us go. For quite a while I had been annoyed with Papa for taking so long to realize that there was no future for us Jews in Germany. Karlheinz' family had not been the only one to get out; almost every week another seat in our class became vacant. And after the "night of broken glass" on November 10, the whole school was shut down. Not an enticing prospect for the long term, and the idea of leaving home for good, even without parents and with my little sister in tow, appeared attractive to me.

The school where Karlheinz Schweber had been my classmate was called the *Philanthropin*. It was the pride of the Frankfurt Jewish community, which had established it in 1806 as a humanistic, secular institution where religious subjects were also taught. The Greek name stood for its literal meaning, "Love of Mankind," rather than philanthropy in the current sense. After Hitler came to power in 1933, Jewish children all over the city transferred from the neighborhood schools they attended to the *Philanthropin* (and to the Samson Raphael Hirsch *Schule* run by the Orthodox Jewish community). This was a gradual process at first, which accelerated with each passing year. In 1931 I, too, had entered first grade in a municipal school; at that time it had not occurred to my parents to send me to a Jewish school. But after 1933 things became nasty for me; I was set upon by youngsters on the way to school, and my homeroom teacher, Mr. Habig, made matters worse by anti-semitic remarks in class.

The transfer thus came as a relief, also because the *Philanthropin* was an excellent school, both at the elementary and secondary levels. As throughout the German school system, the division came at age ten, with the more talented pupils being promoted to the *Gymnasium* (high school) while the less favored continued in the *Volksschule* until age 14. Each *Gymnasium*

class (again as all over Germany) had its own color velvet cap, something which contributed to the class spirit. There were separate classes for boys and girls, and at intermission time the two groups played in different parts of the school yard. While there was no crossing over during school hours, there was nothing the school could do about boys and girls walking, or riding the bicycle, home together. There were several such couples, and Karlheinz and his friend Marianne were one of them. I often resented it when Karlheinz preferred her company to mine on the way home. But I tried to hide my jealousy.

The school had many first-rate teachers, and the subjects taught included German, math and foreign languages, Hebrew, Bible, history and science. (Latin and Greek had recently been replaced by English and French, to better prepare the student body for emigration). The teacher who made the strongest impression on me was the senior gym teacher and sports coach, Emil Stelzer by name. He was one of the few members of the faculty who were not Jewish, and yet we never felt that he was not one of us. Except perhaps that his external appearance was so completely Aryan. Blond, ramrod straight, with steel blue eyes, tanned from being out of doors so much, he was the type the Nazis idealized. He taught the boys in all the classes gymnastics on instruments, boxing and wrestling, and also trained teams for competition among Jewish sports clubs.

When the school remained closed after Crystal Night, Emil Stelzer could have found a job elsewhere. But he remained loyal to the *Philanthropin*. He stayed with it when it re-opened again on a reduced scale some weeks later, until it was closed down finally by official decree in 1942, when most of Frankfurt's remaining Jews had been deported. Stelzer was given one more chance to opt out and save himself. His wife was Jewish, and she was on the list of deportees.

The Nazis told him to leave her, and remain behind as a racially pure Aryan. But he refused, and joined her voluntarily on the transport. They were both gassed at Auschwitz.

Actually - and this is a bit difficult to confess – I was not altogether unhappy when the school did not reopen after Crystal Night.. About a week earlier, my class was given a test in Biology, which was not my favorite subject. In fact, I got a worse grade only in Music, which was not my fault as both my parents were tone-deaf. This time I was almost sure I had flunked the test - something that had never happened to me before, and which would leave a permanent stain on my record as the class' Musterschueler (model student). So that for the past week I had wandered through the school's corridors with a vague hope that something would happen to stave off the dread day when the test results would be announced. Then came November 10, and neither I nor anyone else would ever know whether I passed or flunked. Except for the teacher, Dr. Max Selig, who was among those deported.

All of this may sound rather frivolous; but I recall it to show that the mind of a 14-year-old still is likely to function along intensely personal lines, rather than in terms of the larger important events swirling around him. Crystal Night meant to all intents and purposes the end of German Jewry; the burning of the synagogues, which I witnessed from a window on an upper floor of my school, was an act of unparalleled barbarity; the deportation of all adult Jewish males to concentration camps presaged much worse to come... But here I was, worrying about my Biology exam.

Lotte and I were able to leave Germany by joining a *Kindertransport* consisting of the eighty orphan children who were being cared for by Frankfurt's Jewish Orphanage. Its director, a Mr. Marx, was a friend of Papa's, and Mutti heard that he was making arrangements for his charges to leave for France. There the Jewish community had committed itself to place them in

similar institutions. Mr. Marx readily agreed to have us join the group, which was scheduled to leave for Strasbourg on December 6. He would himself would escort the children and supervise their placement.

The farewell at the railroad station, its glass arches emerging from the wintry Frankfurt dawn on the morning of December 6, marked the end of the German chapter in my life. But here again, sorrowful as the parting was for Mutti who could barely suppress her tears, for myself the excitement of the journey soon got the upper hand. Strasbourg was less than four hours away, but it was going to be the longest train journey of my life. My travel until then had been mostly limited to twice yearly trips to my grandfather's house in Eberstadt, barely 45 minutes' ride in a local train. Crossing borders on fast trains was the privilege of a few rich boys in my class whose parents took them on vacations in Switzerland or Italy. Travel by plane was almost unknown. Yet I was even more fascinated by planes than by trains, and watching the occasional Junkers-52 Lufthansa craft take off and land from the old Frankfurt airfield was a favorite Sunday afternoon pastime. An even bigger thrill was an excursion, with my class, to the site of the new Rhein-Main airport then being built on a clearing of old pine forest to the south of the city. It was to become, after the war, one of Europe's busiest airports. But at the time of our class visit there were no runways yet, though the field was already the base of a huge craft which needed no runway to soar into the sky. It was the brand new airship *Hindenburg*, successor to the older, much smaller *Graf Zeppelin*. The *Hindenburg*, then one of the wonders of the world, was just being readied, in a cavernous hangar in a far corner of the field, for its maiden flight to the United States. The year was 1937, and I make mention of it because I recall how proud we were, pupils of the Frankfurt Jewish community school, to see this symbol of German industrial and technical might overfly the *Philanthropin* a few days later at the outset of its transatlantic

voyage. It was intermission time, and we waved frantically from the school yard to the low-flying craft, eager that the crew and passengers in the gondola should take notice of us and wave back. How proud we were then, and oh, how grief-stricken when the great ship burst into flames as it came in for a landing three days later at Lakehurst, New Jersey. In our hearts, it seems, we were still German patriots.

The event which at last made my father realize there was no future in Germany for its Jews occurred shortly before the Night of Broken Glass. Among the Jewish population of 600,000, there were some tens of thousands who were Polish citizens, and these the German government decided to get rid of by forcing them to go back to Poland. When the Polish authorities refused to accept them, the Germans simply dumped them - whole families including the old, the sick and the very young - in a strip of no man's land next to the Polish border. Although there was no bloodshed involved, it was an act of shocking inhumanity. And it set off the chain of events which culminated in the pogroms of the *Kristallnacht*. A young man named Herschel Grynszpan, who lived in Paris, stood by helplessly as his aged parents were expelled from their home in Germany and deported to the Polish border. In an act designed to draw the world's attention to their plight, he shot an official of the German Embassy in the French capital. The death a few days later of the diplomat, Ernst vom Rath, was the pretext for the Nazi government to launch its wholesale attack on the entire Jewish population.

The Schwebers, too, were of Polish nationality, but by getting out in time they were spared the suffering of Grynszpan's parents which drove their son to his act of desperation. And for many of the German Jews, my father among them, the fate of their Polish Jewish neighbors was a clear signal that their turn, too, would soon come. My father hurried to the American consulate which, faced with a sudden onrush of applicants for immigration visas and a small staff to

process them, handed out numbered slips on a first-come, first-served basis. My father was among the early birds, and his low number entitled him to be received by the consul a short time later. By that time the Affidavit of Support, the *sine qua non* for every would-be immigrant whereby a relative or friend guarantees that he will not become a public burden, would have arrived, sent by my Uncle Arthur in New York. In a month's time we could be on board a ship leaving Hamburg or Bremen for the U.S.

That was the scenario. In life, things happened differently.

A few days after my father was given his number at the American consulate, his cousin Hugo Heyum rang the bell at our apartment. Hugo was a tall, serious-looking man who had recently lost his job as a high-school teacher of mathematics in the nearby town of Neu-Isenburg. All Jews teaching in the public schools were dismissed, and there was nothing left for him to do but emigrate. It had been a hard blow for him; he had a non-Jewish wife, and he had hoped he could stay on. But the Nuremberg laws were quite adamant: - he was still a Jew and as such not fit to teach German youth. Moreover his daughter, Ursula, blonde and fair-skinned like her mother, as a *Mischling ersten Grades* (mixed blood of the first degree) would have trouble continuing in school. So he, too, had planned to call on the American consulate in Frankfurt to get a number. But his train was late, and he had just missed the consulate's office hours. So he would have to come back another time.

My father had always felt admiration for Hugo, who was the only one in the family with an academic education and occupying a highly respected position (until recently). Now, faced with his cousin who was disappointed over the failure of his mission, he made a characteristic gesture. "Take my number," he said to Hugo Heyum. "I'll go get another one in the morning." This little act of generosity was to have dire consequences for us, his immediate family. I don't

know whether my father called on the consulate the next morning; perhaps he had more urgent business that day and got there only the following week. But the result was that there were now hundreds of people ahead of us on the waiting list, and the new number meant that our turn at the consulate would come only weeks, maybe months, later than with the original one. Many years afterwards I heard my mother say that she could never forgive my father for giving that number away: his foolish empathy had torn our family apart. But for now there was only resignation, not despair. A few more weeks of waiting for the visas to America, so it appeared, was not the end of the world. But then came the Crystal Night, and our world did come to an end.

3. Strasbourg – Thann – Strasbourg

Before our train crossed the River Rhine, which formed the border with France, the German customs officers aboard made a thorough search of our luggage, to make sure that none of the eighty Jewish children in the group were smuggling any currency abroad. Each was allowed to take with him no more than ten German marks. On the other side of the bridge, as the train rumbled slowly into the Strasbourg station, no one bothered to check our luggage. Even the youngest of us suddenly felt that he was breathing the air of freedom.

On the platform, women volunteers awaited us with cocoa and a warm lunch, and then helped the children board buses to take them to their new accommodations. Mr. Marx, the director of the Frankfurt orphanage who had escorted us on the train, took the two of us aside and introduced us to one of the women, Andrée Salomon. She assured him that she would personally see to it that we got on the train to Thann, then took us to the station restaurant for some more food. She asked me to keep in touch with her after we got to the Schwebers and gave me her telephone number. She was a woman of about thirty, with dark curly hair, speaking German fluently, and she seemed to smile at us with her eyes. Suddenly I felt no longer alone.

Night was falling when we got off the Strasbourg-Basel express at Mulhouse, where we had to change for the local to Thann. It was cold on the open platform, and a light drizzle was changing to snow. As we clambered off the carriage, Karlheinz spotted us and came running over. He embraced us warmly, then carried our luggage to the local train on the next track. The ride to Thann took only twenty minutes, but it was long enough for me to realize that we had grown apart in the year since we were classmates at the *Philanthropin*. It was no longer my old friend Karlheinz who had met us at the station but Charles, a French *lycéen* (high school student). He wore his *béret* at a rakish angle and looked every inch a young Frenchman. I soon

was deeply absorbed in his studies and also had a new circle of friends. When he asked me to join the group on a hike to the *Hartmannsweilerkopf* (a nearby peak in the Vosges mountains) I went along but felt all day like the outsider that I was.

Lotte began attending elementary school immediately after our arrival. There was a problem at first with the language, but it didn't take her long to catch on (the German accent remained, but many of her classmates spoke French with a thick Alsatian accent as well). The main culture shock was that it was a Catholic school, and all the teachers were nuns. She was excused while all the other girls studied their catechism and was allowed to come in an hour later. But she actually envied the others and often sneaked in to listen. Like all the girls in her class, she had to wear a black apron to school.

My own situation was more complicated. I applied to the *lycée* that Karlheinz attended but was told that no new students were admitted during the school year. Also, my French was not quite up to *Lycée* standards; compared to Karlheinz' mastery of the language I had a long way to go. What this meant was that my formal education had, for the time being, come to an end.

I began to look around for an alternative, and found a job of sorts. It turned out the first money I ever made was from the stock market. Through an acquaintance of the Schwebers' I was introduced to an elderly gentleman who was blind and who was looking for someone to read stock quotations to him from the financial pages. He owned a portfolio of securities and was anxious to keep up with their daily fluctuations. I spent two hours with him most weekday mornings, for which he paid me ten francs a session. Anyone who is even slightly familiar with prices on Wall Street nowadays will be surprised at my recollection of the levels they traded at

in 1938. General Motors sold for around \$3 a share; General Electric for \$10, and most of the other well known companies somewhere in between.

The paper from which I read these quotations was the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, and since Thann was not far from the Swiss border, it was delivered early enough for my employer to have his breakfast while I read to him from the stock tables. Sometimes, when his shares went up, he offered me a *croissant* from his plate. Although Mr. Heidenheim was old and I was young, he was wealthy and I was poor, we did have something important in common. We were both recent refugees from Nazi Germany, and we both hoped to get to the United States. I don't recall just why the old man chose Thann, of all places, as his temporary refuge. But it became more and more clear to me that it was not the place for me. The job began to bore me and I looked for an alternative. To the Schwebers I could not look for further assistance, beyond the hospitality they so generously offered to us. Mr. Schweber was busy producing bouillon cubes; Karlheinz was so preoccupied with his studies he had time for me only on Sundays, and Rosa Schweber did all she could to be a surrogate mother to Lotte, for which I was grateful.

Clearly, it was time to think more seriously about what our teachers at the *Philanthropin* had warned us all along: there was no assurance that we could continue our studies abroad, and that we should begin learning a trade to support ourselves. The Frankfurt Jewish community had begun to offer courses for young people to attend after school hours, and in the months before leaving I had taken up lettering and sign painting. A kind of elementary graphic design, this was looked upon as a skill that could be useful in any language and required a minimum of materials and equipment. At the time, I found that I was fairly good at it. But now I realized that drawing letters and painting posters was not really what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

There was, however, another subject I had pursued as a hobby, and that I could see myself exercising, with a bit more training, as a vocation: photography. I had owned – and used – a camera ever since my Aunt Bella had brought me a red Kodak box camera when she came on a visit from America in 1931. I was seven at the time. More recently, with the help of black-out paper, I had converted a corner of my room in Frankfurt into a darkroom where I developed my films and also operated an enlarger. The results, as collected in several albums, were quite creditable. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea of becoming a photographer. But here, too, Thann was not the place where I could exercise, or rather learn, my new occupation. Then I recalled that when we stopped off in Strasbourg on our way to Thann Mme. Andrée Salomon, the volunteer social worker who received us with such warmth at the station, had told me to phone her anytime I ran into a problem .

Before long I was on the phone to Andrée and told her of my predicament. She responded with characteristic speed and effectiveness. With the help of friends and acquaintances, she 1) found me a place as an apprentice with a Strasbourg photographer and 2) had me admitted to a boarding school for Jewish boys from outlying areas, which was a rather remarkable institution of the Strasbourg community. It was called *Ecole de Travail*, and in addition to boarding them, offered continuing instruction on Sundays and evenings to youngsters who had finished their formal schooling at age 14 and were now learning a trade in the city. (I was to learn French and math there, in addition to Jewish subjects).

Within a week I was on the train to Strasbourg, leaving Lotte behind with the Schwebers and the nuns. It was the beginning of January, 1939. Looking back now on my departure from Thann, I am not at all sure that it was in the spirit of the promise I had made to Mutti not to let Lotte out of my sight.

As for myself, the chapter in my life that began with my second arrival in Strasbourg promised to hold a lot more interest than anything Thann had to offer. I found myself in a new and stimulating environment. There was, first of all, Mme. Salomon herself and her family. When it turned out that the place she had reserved for me at the *Ecole de Travail* would not become vacant for a few more days, she simply put me up as a house guest in the tastefully furnished home she shared with her husband, Tobie. Andrée had no children of her own, and I had the vague but not unwelcome feeling that she looked upon me as a son. I quickly became part of the extended family. When the vacancy at the *Ecole* was delayed further, I was moved around the corner to the apartment of Andrée's mother, where there was extra space. A matriarchal figure with a delightful sense of humor, Mme. Sulzer made me feel equally at home as her daughter had done. Through her, I learned a great deal about the recent history of the Jews of Alsace and of the Sulzer family's share in it. Another block away was the home of Andrée's younger sister, Yetti, whose husband, Jules Weil, was a lawyer and leader in the Jewish community. After I eventually moved to the *Ecole de Travail*, I continued to be a guest for *Shabbat* lunch at the Weils, discussing current affairs with Jules and playing on the floor with their five-year-old son, Jackie. I had much admiration for Yetti, who possessed a great deal of charm, dressed stylishly (I still remember the wedgie shoes she wore, at a time when these had just made their appearance) and was also a first-rate cook and housewife. Now I can admit that I envied Jules., especially when I fantasized about the love-making of the young couple.

I spent altogether eight months in Strasbourg, until the war broke out and I had to leave the city, together with most of the civilian population. Living at the *Ecole de Travail*, I spent my working hours as an apprentice to a photographer, Charles Spehner. Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of my stay in Strasbourg was the impact it made on my self-perception as a

Jew. From the distance, I realized how badly hurt the German Jewish community I'd grown up in had been by the Nazi regime, psychologically as well as physically. The years of humiliation left their mark on the individuals who were part of it. For me, the freedom of living in a democracy now included the freedom to be Jewish, and it was exhilarating. The people I now moved among wore their Jewishness naturally; they were neither "proud" nor did they try to hide it. It was a part of their personality, and it seemed to blend well with the part that was French and the part that was Alsatian. I admired the ease with which my new friends switched from the Alsatian dialect – still the every-day language in Strasbourg – to French or to high-German. I saw it as a sign of French liberality that throughout Alsace, German was still recognized as the official language alongside of French. Strasbourg's main daily newspaper appeared simultaneously in both languages. No attempt was made to suppress German and impose the use of French. when the province reverted to France after the first World War.

Probably the most powerful single factor reinforcing my Jewish identity was my membership in the Jewish scout movement, *les Eclaireurs Israélites de France*, EIF for short. Andrée Salomon introduced me to *Chameau* (scouting nickname of Dr. Frédéric Hammel), the regional Commissioner or senior leader of the movement. He in turn saw to it that I found my place in the hierarchy (which was at the bottom). I was sworn in, was entitled to wear the scout uniform with the Baden-Powell hat, and took part in the meetings of my *troupe* and *patrouille*. As scouts everywhere, I learned to tie knots and build a fire, to pitch a tent and to find my way out of a dark forest with the aid of a compass. I took the twelve articles of the scout's oath with the utmost seriousness, and to this day can recite three or four of them in the original French: *L'Eclaireur fait chaque jour une bonne action* (the scout does a good deed each day); *l'éclaireur est loyal et fidèle* (the scout is loyal and faithful); *l'éclaireur est propre dans ses pensées et ses*

actions (the scout is clean in his thoughts and his actions) - not always easy for a 15-year-old to observe.

When not out hiking in the countryside or camping in the Vosges mountains, our troop held its *réunions* at the *Mercaz* (Center), the community-owned building which served the EIF and other Jewish youth movements as a meeting place. The *Mercaz*' director, Leo Cohn, was another in the series of role models which Strasbourg Jewry supplied to its impressionable visitor in such ample measure. Among his many accomplishments, Leo conducted *Shabbat* morning services at the *Mercaz* in a way that made me want to attend them —something that had never happened before. On *Shabbat* afternoons he gave talks or led discussions on Jewish topics that caused his audience to clamor for more. A tall, gaunt figure in his early thirties, Leo was both a brilliant talker and a natural-born leader, instead of the academic career which was no doubt open to him he chose to devote himself to his work in informal education. Like others of his generation the war found him active in the Jewish *maquis* (underground) which evolved from the EIF; he was caught by the Nazis and tortured to death.

The high point of the scouting year was the annual summer camp in a remote part of France. In 1939, the site chosen by our *chef de troupe*, Jean Lévy, was a fishing village called Camaret in the Finistère Peninsula, at the Western tip of Brittany. I spent three thrilling weeks there, together with my comrades, camping on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and hiking through the rugged countryside and also practicing my scouting skills. On our outward journey in early August we traversed Paris by bus from north to south as we changed trains from the *Gare de l'Est* to the *Gare Montparnasse*, and that first nighttime view of the City of Lights, glistening in a gentle summer rain, was nearly as exciting as the camp experience itself.

But the bliss of those weeks was short-lived.

4. The Outbreak of War

On our way back from Brittany, passing through Paris again, one of the *chefs* bought the *Paris Soir* at the *Gare de l'Est*. The evening paper's huge black headline screamed that Hitler had made a deal with Stalin. The date was August 23, 1939. The Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact, as it became known after the foreign ministers who signed it in Moscow that day, enabled Hitler to launch his attack on Poland a week later by securing his Eastern flank. The scouts in the compartment understood the ominous meaning of the event, and they became suddenly quiet with foreboding as the train sped through the night.

Back at Strasbourg, the scent of war was everywhere. Monsieur Spehner, the photographer to whom I was apprenticed, had been called up to his unit in the air force. He was a photographer in a bomber squadron based not far from the city. I worked by myself in the laboratory, doing odds and ends under Mrs. Spehner's direction. (She also worked part-time in a bakery owned by her brother, which was located downstairs in the same apartment house, 37 rue Oberlin). Two days later my boss came home on leave. He had a piece of sensational news for me. Before he let me in on the secret, he made me swear that I would never divulge the source of the information. His squadron was under orders to bomb Frankfurt as soon as war was declared! He told it to me so that I could notify my parents to get out of the city. I was frantic, close to despair. I did not dare use the telephone, which was functioning but probably tapped by both sides. There was only the foreign mail, which was also still being sent but subject to censorship on the German side. I had to be careful about what I wrote, lest I got my parents into trouble. I knew my father was about to leave for Holland; and I could get him arrested again. So I phrased the letter with such circumspection ("I would go on vacation away

from the city, if I were you”) that my parents couldn’t make out what I had in mind and ignored my advice. It was just as well, because the French never did drop any bombs on Frankfurt. By the time the Americans and the British did, much later in the war, both my father and my mother were long gone.

I often wondered afterwards whether there actually were such plans or whether my boss played a cruel hoax on his apprentice. I could not get myself to believe the latter because I felt Mr. Spehner had a genuine liking for me and even sent me an album of his pictures on “Strasbourg’s Sufferings at the Liberation “ with a personal dedication. He moved with his family to the south of France after the war and I never saw him again, so I could not ask him point-blank. It’s quite possible that the bombing mission was actually planned but never carried out. In fact, there were no armed hostilities at all between Germany and France from the time war was declared on September 3, 1939 until the Germans invaded Belgium and Holland on May 10, 1940. The period soon became known as the Phony War; in French, *la drôle de guerre* (the funny war). The French felt fairly safe behind their network of concrete fortifications, underground bunkers and tank traps known as the Maginot Line, named after the general who planned it. For most of its length, the “line” faced the Germans across the Rhine in Alsace, and there was every chance that the province would become a major battlefield. The French high command therefore decided to evacuate the civilian population to the interior. Those unable to make arrangements on their own, were directed to an area in central France known as the Perigord, with the city of Perigueux as its capital.

The *Ecole de Travail* was about to close, and I was faced with a major dilemma. Where should we go, Lotte and I? The community was sending some of the Frankfurt orphans who were still in the Strasbourg area to Perigueux; others were being absorbed by Jewish institutions in the

make arrangements on their own, were directed to an area in central France known as the Périgord, with the city of Périgueux as its capital.

The *Ecole de Travail* was about to close, and I was faced with a major dilemma. Where should we go, Lotte and I? The community was sending some of the Frankfurt orphans who were still in the Strasbourg area to Périgueux; others were being absorbed by Jewish institutions in the Paris region. I was on the phone with the Schwebers, and they offered to take us along to Nice, where Papa Schweber's employers had a plant, and were offering him employment there. There was still another alternative: its name was Vaucresson, a suburban community about 10 miles to the West of Paris. Vaucresson was the home of Willy Reiss, who had once been landlord – and friend – of my uncle Martin in Frankfurt. Martin Marx, my mother's brother, now lived in New York and had written to Willy Reiss from there to ask whether he would be willing to take in his nephew and niece temporarily if the need arose. Mr. Reiss answered graciously that he had four children of his own; there was room for another two. Then the war broke out, and the need did arise. I chose Vaucresson over Nice or Périgord.

I packed my few belongings and left Strasbourg in haste for Thann, after wiring to Willy Reiss we were coming. (he had no telephone). There was no time to take proper leave of my friends, who were all in the process of mobilization (if they were men of army age) or "evacuation" in any event. I had the feeling the Schwebers were relieved that we were not coming with them; it's enough having to leave home with one's own family, without having to care for other people's children in a strange place. It was a tearful farewell nevertheless, especially for Lotte who had grown attached to her foster parents. Karlheinz and I exchanged a long handshake – neither of us suspected that it was the last time we would see one another.

I received a letter from Karlheinz in 1942 postmarked Nice, in what was then still unoccupied France. It was a desperate cry for help in getting to America. HHe asked me to send him the affidavit of support required by American consuls before granting a visa, and to do it quickly before the Nazis would overrun the unoccupied zone of France and make escape impossible

This they did shortly afterward, and any papers I might have been able to obtain would probably have come too late. .

Karlheinz was killed by the Nazis; his parents survived, and they told me how he died when I visited them in an old-age home near Nice after the war. He had been a member of the *Maquis*, the French underground and, having found a job as an interpreter in a German army headquarters, was able to pass on valuable information to his comrades in the *résistance*. The Germans, not knowing that he was Jewish, valued his talents and placed full confidence in him. But he was betrayed, and sent to Auschwitz.

5. Vaucresson

Although I had only just turned 15, I was getting used to making decisions on my own which are normally still made for children by their parents. Lotte, now 11, was still too young to consult with; she usually accepted my judgment without question, the same way children accept their parents' judgment in vital matters. What I still lacked at that age was the capacity to look ahead and predict or estimate the results of my decisions, something which comes only with experience. But this relative innocence also kept me from pondering the pros and cons, the way adults often do, before deciding one way or another. I suppose it was sheer luck that most of my decisions at the time proved correct in that they helped me achieve the goal of reaching the United States.

But at this time all this was still in the dim future. When I decided to seek refuge near Paris I had no inkling that nine months later Paris itself would fall to the Germans and that we would find ourselves in flight from them on the road, along with many thousands of others.

There was probably another side to the way I arrived at decisions, which might be called the adventure factor. Which path was likely to be more adventurous, more promising in terms of new experiences. Now the thought of being in (or near) Paris excited me, and it overshadowed the sadness of leave-taking and the uncomfortable six-hours spent standing up in the corridors of a crowded train. Strangely, I had been to, or rather through Paris only ten days earlier, on the way back from the scout camp in Brittany. Now I was on another train, with my sister sleeping on my shoulder, again heading toward Paris. I had the strange feeling that my wanting to be in Paris so badly, ten days ago, had played a part in putting me on that train. Once again, it seemed that wishing something badly enough helped make it come true.

When we arrived at the *Gare de l'Est*, this time at sunrise, the station, with its sweeping glass arches, reminded me of the railroad station in Frankfurt where we had said goodbye to my mother. Our luggage was a bit too heavy for boarding a bus, so I took a taxi in the line outside the station. The destination was the *Gare St. Lazare*, where we boarded the suburban electric train for Vaucresson, the home of our new hosts. Following the instructions Monsieur Reiss had sent us, we got off at the town before Vaucresson, which was called Garches. There was no taxi at the station, so we had to make our way on foot. The two pieces of luggage with which we had left Germany, a black suitcase and a green Rucksack, were still with us as we made our way uphill to the Allée St. Cucufa, where the Reisses lived at No. 6. Monsieur Reiss' map showed a shortcut, a footpath named *Chemin des Vignes*, which was rather steep and, because of the two bags, heavy going. It was a Sunday, the 31st of August, and an unusually hot day. It took us over half an hour from the station to the house, with a brief rest stop every hundred yards or so. At the top of the hill, where a highway separated the two *communes* of Garches and Vaucresson, there was a yellow mail box, with *République Française* embossed on it. In the months to come, it was to be the recipient of the many letters that kept me in contact with the world, and above all with Papa in Holland. On the Vaucresson side of the highway a blue street sign read, "Allée St. Cucufa". We were sweaty and out of breath, but we had arrived at our destination.

The Reisses – all six of them – did their best to make us feel at home immediately. They showed us to our rooms, henceforth known as *la chambre à Charlotte* and *la chambre à Ernest*. The house, which was rented from an old couple who lived next door, was spacious, the furnishings old-fashioned and well worn. The plumbing especially was out-of-date; it reminded me of my grandfather Stock's house in Eberstadt, except that here one didn't have to walk across a cobbled barnyard to reach the toilet. (At the Schwebers the house and rooms had

been smaller, but the plumbing more modern.) The Reiss boys were aged four to ten, with two-year intervals. Their names were (starting with the oldest) Albert Michel, Herbert Ludovic, Edouard Robert and David William. These names sounded much too solemn for the exuberant, not to say, wild personalities of the boys. Papa Willy, who no doubt wanted to honor certain of his ancestors or relatives in naming his foursome, was apparently aware of this and gave each son also a nickname. I can still hear him calling in the direction of the wooded area at the other end of the *Allée*, which was the boys' favorite playing ground, with his hands cupped to his mouth, "Abi, Erfi, Mimi, Nène!" when it was time for supper. Not that there was much response, the first time. None of the boys really respected his father, sad to say, perhaps because he did not know how to apply discipline. Cajoling was his main mode of communicating with them, then came reasoning and finally appealing to their goodwill. Mme. Reiss (Marthe, but no one ever called her by her first name) also addressed them by explaining and reasoning, appealing mainly to their common sense. While Papa Willy would often wring his hands in despair, Marthe remained rather detached, always preserving her dignity. Her deeply lined face reflected a certain melancholia, as if she knew that little could be done. In return, the two middle boys – Erfi (8) and Mimi (6) - called their mother *folle* (crazy one) behind her back and sometimes also to her face.. Abi was more of a gentleman, but he did nothing to restrain his siblings. David, at four, was too young to count.

When Willy Reiss was interned by the authorities as a German (i.e. enemy) national not long after our arrival, I suddenly found myself in the role of *pater familias*. Without her husband at her side, Marthe Reiss would have had a hard time coping with her daily chores without me. These included managing her offspring: feeding them, seeing them off to school and helping them with their homework, getting them into bed and in general keeping them out of mischief.

I had enough time for my new role: while Lotte again was promptly enrolled in the community school and left home with the boys in the morning, I once more found myself ineligible for admission to the *Lycée* and spent most of my time sitting in M. Reiss' study, teaching myself English. My attempts to find work with a photographer in Paris, on the basis of my Strasbourg experience and the intervention of the Paris EIF office, came to nought. My German nationality, and the fact that I did not have a working permit (neither of which had deterred Monsieur Spehner), made potential employers hesitate. Lotte also suffered from being "German." Shortly after the war was declared, the school children came home with gas masks in metal canisters which had been distributed in the classroom. All but Lotte and the two older Reiss boys, that is, who were denied the benefit of the mask because of their nationality. While those three were all born in Germany; Mimi and Nène, the two youngest, were French-born and therefore entitled to the mask. Lotte was disconsolate about being left out; and I found it difficult to explain the intricacies of the situation to her. I think she was more distressed about the stigma of not having a mask to bring to class than about the dangers of poison gas.

In the meantime, it was still a "phony war." In the afternoon of September 3 Vaucresson's fire engine had raced through the Allée St. Cucufa with its siren screaming, to announce that war had been declared. But there was no immediate follow up. The children went back to school, and after a week or two left their gas masks at home. Only poor Monsieur Reiss, who had chosen France as his adopted homeland, had to report, with a small suitcase in his hand, to Maisons-Laffitte, a suburb widely known for its race course which had been turned into an internment camp for enemy aliens. I was lucky to be under sixteen, which was the cut-off age for internment. Instead, I merely had to report to the police in Garches once a week to have my provisional identity card stamped.

I did rather well in assuming authority in the household. Where the boys had ignored their father's pleas and called their mother names, they seemed to respect me and the rules I laid down.. A main rule was, "no swear words in the house!" (*fou*, *folle* = crazy, idiot were among the milder ones outlawed). To enforce this rule and others, I devised the following tactic: whoever had not broken any rule at the end of the day was eligible for a *bon point* (coupon); the one who had the most coupons at the end of the month received a prize (such as a ball, or pump for the bicycle, financed by Mme. Reiss). There were some noisy scenes just before bedtime when the *bons points* were distributed; one brother would dispute the other's claim to good behavior and reveal that he heard him use a *gros mot* (swear word) under his breath. When the prize was awarded at the end of the month, there was triumph and disappointment. To avoid too much of the latter, consolation prizes were added for the runners-up. All in all, the atmosphere in the house became quieter, and more civilized. Mme. Reiss was grateful.

I took advantage of the boys' readiness to hear me out to teach them some basic Judaism, about which they knew very little. Willy Reiss was the scion of an assimilated Frankfurt banking family and had received an excellent education, but Jewish subjects were not part of the curriculum. His wife, who had been his secretary in the private banking firm he worked in, came from Schwarzwald (South German) peasant stock. To this day I do not know whether she converted to Judaism before marrying Willy Reiss, but I rather doubt it.

It might well be that the strong sense of Jewish identification of the two older boys in later life was instilled by the lessons I gave that winter. I remember particularly how impressed all of them were by the story of Hanukka, the heroic fight of the Maccabees against the pagan Greeks, and the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem with the flask of oil that lasted

fully eight days. We lit the candles that commemorate the occasion (as I had done in my parents' house) and for the first time the house on the Allée St. Cucufa had a *Menorah* in the window.

While her husband was in the internment camp, Mme. Reiss made me her confidant as she wrestled with her financial problems. The French government had not only deprived Willy Reiss of his liberty, it also made it extremely difficult for him to support his family in wartime. This was because his bank accounts, as enemy alien property, were "sequestered," which means blocked, and only small amounts needed for the bare necessities were being released from time to time. Being a prudent man, M. Reiss had placed some of his funds in London, but the British authorities applied the same procedure against German citizens as the French. Even in Palestine, where M. Reiss also kept some money, the British authorities promptly "sequestered" it. (In 1949 when I visited Israel for the first time, Mme. Reiss asked me to locate a lawyer in Jerusalem who could help her gain access to the funds. By then the money had lost most of its value through devaluation.)

In addition to studying English, I taught myself how to type on the family's old Underwood, with the help of a "teach yourself" booklet. Soon I was able to help Mme. Reiss with her correspondence with various lawyers and banks. Moreover, having recently acquired some knowledge of the financial world through reading the stock quotations to the blind old gentleman in Thann, I thought myself qualified, now and again, to offer Mme. Reiss some advice, in addition to typing her letters.

Mme. Reiss later showed her appreciation in her own way.

On June 13, the morning of the day we left the house, she let me in on a secret she had previously kept to herself. Before being interned, her husband had given her a purse of gold coins, of which she exchanged one from time to time into francs when she was short of

cash. They were small yellowish twenty Thaler pieces, such as were the common currency in Prussia and other German states before Bismarck. She took out some for the journey, but thought it was too risky to take the whole hoard along. So she asked me to help her bury the remaining coins under the coal stove in the kitchen. I don't recall how many pieces there were; perhaps thirty or forty. Just before we buried the purse, Mme. Reiss opened it once more and took out a coin. She handed it to me. "Keep it until you really need it one day," she said, a wan smile lighting up her careworn face. I accepted the coin silently and put it in my pocket. There was no way anyone could suspect from looking at the stove that it held a buried treasure; only Marthe Reiss and I knew the secret. But when she returned with the boys to Vaucresson after the war, the gold was gone. So was the stove, and every piece of furniture in the house.

Meanwhile – this was winter, 1939 – my own financial situation was precarious. In other words, I had no savings or other resources to fall back on. In Strasbourg, Monsieur Spehner had paid me 50 francs, which was then about \$10, a month. This was used up for train fares, phone calls, stamps and other necessities. The German 20 Marks (about four to the dollar) Lotte and I were permitted to take out of Germany were long since used up. Mother had never been able to provide us with money (sending money abroad was a crime in Nazi Germany), and with the declaration of war direct contact with her was broken off in any event. With Papa in Holland we corresponded regularly, but he had no extra funds to send us. My only steady source of income was an occasional dollar bill enclosed with a letter from an uncle or aunt in America. I carefully noted these receipts – as well as expenditures – in the calendar supplied by the Félix Potin grocery chain to its clients.

After my failure of to find employment in Paris with a photographer, I was ready to do almost anything to earn a few francs. The first opportunity that presented itself was give German

lessons to the daughter of a well-to-do family who lived at the other end of Vaucresson. This brought in ten francs once a week, and it also brought me into contact with a rather elegant household. Anne-Marie, the daughter, was 12, and her parents wanted her to make more rapid progress with her German than she did in her class at the Lycée. I found that I was adept as a teacher; my pupil liked me, and so did her mother. I flattered myself that I was becoming a friend of the family. But the relationship ended abruptly when the Bonichons disappeared from their home without notifying me long before the Germans approached the capital. They never paid me for the last lesson.

I had more luck with Mme. Mahieu, the dentist in Garches who treated the Reiss family members in her practice and also was the parents' counsellor and friend. She had two daughters, one older and one younger than me, and each one rather attractive in her own way. Also a husband who drank a good deal. He used to take her dental work to the laboratory in Paris in his *traction-avant* (Citroën front-wheel drive), but of late – as Mme. Reiss told me in strict confidence – his drinking made him unreliable as a driver-messenger. Mme. Mahieu asked me one day whether I had time to run these errands for her two or three times a week. She would pay me 50 francs a month (the same \$10 I had earned working full-time for M. Spehner) plus the train fare. I agreed eagerly. It meant visiting Paris frequently, and getting paid for it! Often, when I delivered a denture to the lab, which was not far from the *Gare St. Lazare*, I was told to come back later to take back other work, and this gave me time to explore the streets and alleys of the 9th *Arrondissement*, where the lab was located. . Once I went to see a movie, *La Bête Humaine*, with Jean Gabin, based on the novel by Emile Zola. The St..Lazare station, which was just across the square from the movie house, and where I took the electric suburban train back to Garches after completing my errand, formed the background to this powerful tale of a *cheminot*

(locomotive driver) and his illicit love. I still remember it vividly, and now I live on Emile Zola Street, in Tel Aviv.

The round trip fare from Garches to Paris-St. Lazare cost six francs and each trip lasted twenty minutes. Because the conductor did not always come around to check the tickets on the short ride, (and I was so short of funds) I was tempted to cheat the railroad out of its fare. The scheme I devised went like this: the ticket, which was valid only on the day of issue, had the date stamped on the back, and it had to be surrendered at the exit from the platform. I had somehow managed to hold on to a ticket from a previous trip, which I handed to the man at the exit. I had noticed that, being kept busy by the stream of passengers, he had no time to look at the date. But this time there was only a trickle of people getting off the train, and I made the mistake of handing him the outdated ticket nevertheless. He looked at the date and caught my error (or swindle) immediately. He also caught me so roughly by the arm that I almost dropped my briefcase with the precious dental work to the floor. Still holding me by the arm, he left his post to take me to the station master's office. I broke into a cold sweat. What would they do to me ? Send me to jail? Or deport me, as a foreigner, and an enemy national? I thought of Lotte, who depended on me; of Mutti, all alone in Germany, and of Papa in Holland. And of our plan to be reunited in America. Would all this now come to nought? I regretted bitterly that I had risked so much for so little, a paltry six francs. The station master looked at me sternly and said: "Do you know that travelling without a valid ticket is a serious offense?"

Fortunately, I had an alibi. I did have a valid ticket, which I had bought to show the conductor (had he come through the car to ask for it, as he sometimes did) and which I had planned to save for the next trip. I now pulled it out of my pocket, saying that I had handed over the old ticket by mistake. The two men seemed surprised. The station master decided to let me go. But he warned

me: “If we catch you again, you won’t get away so easily.” I’ve travelled with valid tickets ever since.

6. Visas

Uppermost in my mind, in this bleak winter of 1939-40, was obtaining the immigration visa to the United States for Lotte and myself. Since our family was split into three parts, each fraction had to deal separately with the local American consul to complete the formalities.

To help potential emigrants in the Paris area deal with the bureaucratic pitfalls in the migration process, they were referred to the offices of *HICEM*, a migration service operated jointly by the American *HIAS* (Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Society) and the local Jewish community's *Comite d'Emigration*. *HICEM*'s main mission was to assist refugees like ourselves get out of France. I spent many hours in its offices, where our case was being handled rather clumsily. The combination of an incompetent agency official and a rigid, unfeeling consul proved almost fatal in our case. But at the time I was not aware of this; I had implicit trust both in the competence of the *HICEM* staff and the good will of the American consular personnel. Ironically it was Mutti, all by herself in Nazi Germany, who was the first to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles and get the consul to issue the coveted American visa to her. Papa was next, but he literally just missed the boat.

The job of a consul in issuing visas is to administer the U.S. immigration laws, and the regulations the Immigration and Naturalization Service (of the Department of Labor) has set up to interpret these laws. One of the few areas where he is given some leeway is in deciding whether the proof furnished by the applicant's sponsors that he will not become a public burden after arrival in the States is sufficient. That proof is contained in a so-called Affidavit of Support, which the sponsor swears to before a notary public and then submits to the consul. In our case, the sponsor was my uncle Arthur, a brother of my mother's who had been living in the U.S. since

1927. But my uncle was a man of modest means and income; the Great Depression had kept him from rising beyond a presser's job in New York's Garment District. Moreover, he had already provided affidavits to both my parents, who applied for visas separately at the American consulates in Stuttgart and Rotterdam. One way he tried to get around the problem was ask his employer to sign a supplementary affidavit, to guarantee that Lotte and I would not become a public burden after we arrived. This man, Singer by name, was not a member of the family, which in itself weakened the case. If there were another depression in America (the consul might reason) would Mr. Singer have sufficient means – and incentive – to support us, who were not his relatives? And who would pay for our passage? These questions and others might come up at the forthcoming interview at the consulate, and the *HICEM* official in charge of our case tried to prepare us for them. If asked about the tickets, he told us, I should say that *HICEM* would pay for them.

This turned out to be a serious error

The connection with Mme. Mahieu, the dentist, and the frequent trips to Paris that came with it, made my contacts with the Hicem easier. Instead of roaming the streets, while waiting for the work of the lab to be ready, I would take the métro to their office on the rue Vaugirard to hear whether there was any news. Another reason for my visits to the agency was that, wherever fees were involved, the Hicem was ready to reimburse. This was very helpful in our situation.

At one time I thought that the process could be speeded up if we joined Papa in Rotterdam, so we could all get the visa and leave for the U.S. together. He was now living with a Jewish family in the Dutch port city, van Messel by name, and they apparently had room for us too. It would also mean that we could be in close touch with Mutti in Frankfurt, by mail and by phone, since Holland was still neutral in the war. I made inquiries at the Dutch consulate in Paris

about getting a visa and even filled out an application for the two of us, while the Hicem investigated the possibilities through their office in Rotterdam. In the end, nothing came of the scheme; the Dutch consulate informed us in February that the visas had been refused. It was probably just as well; as we might have been stuck in Holland together with Papa when the Germans launched their invasion in May

For the Reiss family, the year 1940 had started out happily: Papa Willy was released from the internment camp. I never found out whether his good luck was due to his age (he was 55) or because he was nearly blind, or because someone realized that it didn't make sense to intern Jews, even though they might be German citizens. This is probably the least likely, because a few months later, when the real shooting war began, they locked up the poor man all over again.

Meanwhile Monsieur Reiss' return from the camp relieved me of some of my more mundane duties, lighting the coal stove that heated the house. (Mme. Reiss tried to set an example for all of us by taking a cold shower every day throughout the year, but Lotte and I preferred to wait for hot water for the once - weekly bath). I took up one new task in the household after Monsieur Reiss' return, and that was reading to the couple in the evening after the children were in bed. We sat around the dining room table, the three of us, with Mme. Reiss darning the boys' socks from a large basket, and her husband, delighting in the comforts of his home, leaning back in his rocking chair and smoking a pipe. They subscribed to a German-language émigré journal which appeared in Paris called *Neues Tagebuch*, whose editor, Leopold Schwarzschild, each week presented his readers with a searching analysis of the international scene. His stinging anti-German editorials provoked the ire of the Nazis; when they eventually caught him they made him pay the price. Among the refugee authors then in Paris who contributed regularly there were names who meant nothing to us at the time but were later to

Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin. We also listened to the radio together; the evening news bulletin always began with the day's army communiqué, which nine times out of ten consisted of a laconic "*Rien à signaler*" (nothing to report).

In February I began, at Mutti's suggestion as relayed by Papa, my daily diary entries in the Félix Potin calendar. Often there was *rien à signaler* in our little world as well. Sometimes Lotte broke the routine by misbehaving..

But the visas figured inevitably every few days. I'll let the diary speak (my translations from the German):

Monday, Feb. 26. *I went to the dental technician in Paris for Mme. Mahieu, after that to the Hicem , where they refused to give me the paper Papa asked for, until they get a reply from the Committee in Rotterdam. Lotte is well again. She behaved outrageously to Monsieur Reiss at table, whereupon I gave her a slap in the face and sent her off to bed.*

Tuesday, Feb. 27 *During the night, an air raid alarm, but as usual we stayed in bed In the morning, errands in Paris, followed by a stroll in Montmartre. The Netherlands consulate, where I phoned, told me there was no reply from their government as yet*

Wednesday, Feb. 28. *Papa wrote unfortunately that our Holland trip won't come off, which depressed me greatly. Now it means waiting again. Went again to the Hicem to ask if their Rotterdam committee replied. The answer was negative . These visits are very tiring, as I have to leave here at 8 o'clock to get a place in the line. There are always a lot of people. Then, after a half hour's boring métro trip, you have to wait for an hour. Thank God it's not too expensive, because I always combine it with errands for Mme. Mahieu, who pays for the trip.*

Friday, March 1 *Papa wrote that he and Mutti now practically are assured of the tickets for the voyage. In the afternoon I accompanied M. Reiss to St. Cloud, where he has to report to the police every Friday.*

Saturday, March 2. *In the morning , after making the beds etc., I did the necessary shopping at the market like every Wednesday and Saturday when I'm not in Paris. Lotte comes home with the news that she is number two in the class. Then I give my German lesson. Even though I have to walk half an hour, it's worth my while for ten francs. The girl already speaks quite fluently.*

Sunday, March 3. *The Sunday goes by like every other day; on those days when there's nothing to do, one yearns most strongly to be away from here, for the parents and for a regular life, full of work. In the afternoon, a disaster. Monsieur Reiss goes walking with all the children in the woods, along with the son of a neighbor, Jean Delmas, who has a new bike. He wanted to let Lotte use it, but M. Reiss forbade it. When she took it nevertheless, she landed in a ditch and the bike was kaputt. Monsieur Reiss said he doesn't want to see her any more, and she came home crying inconsolably. But Mme. Delmas was not angry and forgave her; and said she'll have the bike repaired at her expense.*

Monday, March 4. *I was once again at the Hicem where – enough to drive one crazy – I had to wait fully three yours, only to hear that there was no answer from Rotterdam. I had no choice but to wait for the American papers. The Hicem is not much of a help; one has to take care of everything oneself, until one can tell them, “okay, this is it,” and then they pay for the ticket. Papa sent a postcard; the two days without mail seemed like an eternity.*

Tuesday, March. 5 *Again a day without mail. In the morning, I went to the Netherlands consulate, where they were so nice in the beginning. The visa has been refused provisionally, for the reasons we know. Mme. Reiss paid for Lotte's shoe*

repair, so that I show 28 francs less in expenses. Also mine, which cost 33 francs last week, she wouldn't let me pay. Today I was in Paris twice, in the morning and evening. At night, when the children are in bed, I read the paper to M. and Mme. Reiss until 9:30 – 10 o'clock.

Sunday, March. 10 An eventful day! After I gave my lesson at 8 a.m., I travelled to Paris where I met Chameau, who was very happy to see me. He invited me to spend the day with him. We ate in a kosher restaurant in the Jewish quarter, and in the afternoon went to the Comédie Française, where Cyrano de Bergerac was playing. It was wonderful, and afterwards we still had an ice cream together.

Tuesday, March. 12 This morning I went to the American consulate, where I was told that the papers did not arrive yet. ...When I came home I learned that the mailman had a registered letter from America and will come back with it tomorrow. This means the papers have arrived!

Wednesday, March 13. For sure, it was the expected letter with the papers, and full of joy I went at noon to the Consulate. But, sad to say, they told us to come back next week and didn't even look at the document. We are used to this sort of thing,, and we can forget about leaving this month.

Sunday, March. 17 Only one more day, then we'll find out at the Consulate where we stand, this is what preoccupies me today....After lunch I played a bit with the children, then Mr. Reiss wanted that I go for a walk with them, but I told him I first wanted to teach Lotte some English, which I did. Afterwards they seemed to be insulted, because when I did want to walk with them, Mme. Reiss wouldn't let me and went herself.

Monday, March 18 Again a day lost. How stupid of me to go to the Consulate only in the afternoon, when no visa matters are dealt with. But they gave me a number for tomorrow morning. I had nothing to do in Paris the whole

afternoon, since the denture for Mme. Mahieu was ready only about six. So I sat on a bench on the Place de la Concorde, opposite the Embassy, read the paper and studied English from one of the Langenscheidt booklets that I always carry with me.

Tuesday, March 19. Today I again got neither a positive nor a negative answer at the Consulate. They took the papers and said I would get a final decision within a few days.

Wednesday, March 20. Today my German lesson was especially successful: I translated some chapters from the English booklets, and that worked extremely well. I also give Lotte an English lesson every day.

Friday, March 22. Today I practiced on the typewriter; it's going pretty well. In the afternoon I worked in the garden; the soil has to be turned over completely at this time. With peeling apples the afternoon went by. On Easter or the following week I plan to go to the theater with Charlotte and Abi, so that they'll enjoy their vacations a bit.

Saturday, March 23. Today finally news from Papa. He wrote nothing new, but among other things that he had no heat in his room all winter long, which made me feel sad the whole day. The children were allowed to buy a football, and I played with them all afternoon in the garden.

Monday, March 25. Today general disappointment: after much to and fro the Reiss parents didn't want to let Abi go to the theater with us, it's too dangerous. Lotte made a terrific scene; to console her I went walking in the woods with her in the afternoon, and tomorrow will take her to a museum.

Tuesday, March 26. Today two letters came at once from Papa and Mutti, with Purim pictures of previous years which were fun to look at. But the main item was the news that the parents will leave from Antwerp on April 10. If we get our visas until then, Papa will try everything to take us along. Since we may be called to the consulate

any day, we are postponing our visit to Paris for another two days, so as not to spend money twice.

Thursday, March 28. I finally kept my promise to Lotte and took her to Paris, where we visited the famous Zoo at Vincennes. It is fabulously laid out, without fences, the animals are on high rocks and separated only by ditches from the public. Then we walked about an hour and a half to the Jewish quarter, where we bought a sausage for Mme. Reiss. Then by Metro to the Pont de Sèvres and home on foot.

Saturday, March 30. Again, nothing to report. Papa wrote, however, that Mutti finally got her ticket, and he expects her soon with him.

Sunday, March 31 The Hicem sent a letter, I should come there as soon as possible. Tomorrow I'll go there, and of course am anxious to know what they have to tell me.

Monday, April 1. At the Hicem they had nothing new to tell me: they received a letter from Rotterdam inquiring how far our application had progressed. They will inquire at the (Dutch) consulate where we could get a visa.

Tuesday, April 2. Today was one of the happiest days of our stay here. Mutti wired from Rotterdam, that she was reunited with Papa. Now begins a new chapter in the migration history of our family. Tomorrow might be another such day; since tonight I went, on the advice of Mme. Mahieu, to see a gentleman in the neighborhood who is on the staff of the American embassy, in order to tell him about our case. He was very nice and said I should come see him at the embassy tomorrow where he'll try to help. Mutti wrote a very personal letter, still from Frankfurt.

Wednesday, April 3. This morning at the embassy the man gave me a note for the Consul personally, which caused him to grant me an audience. I explained

our case to him, and he spoke with the vice-consul. Whereupon he told me he didn't think we could travel with my parents, but we would be getting a letter, probably still this week. It's strange, at the Consulate I have to act the opposite from the way I behave at the Hicem. Here I play the elegant young man with rich American relatives; there I'm the poor refugee whose uncles are not in a position to pay for our trip.

Friday, April 5. Today Mutti's first letter from Holland came; probably also the last, since she left aboard a steamer for New York last night. Sadly, alone, apparently Papa didn't get the ticket as yet....

Saturday, April 6: Still no news from the consulate; it can drive you crazy

Sunday, April 7: The mailman brought a huge bundle of letters; I already thought I saw the one from the consulate, but unfortunately there were only (!) eight letters for M. Reiss and none for us.

Tuesday, April 9. Today is the blackest day we lived through since we are in France: the visa was categorically denied to us. At the consulate they returned all our papers together with a letter which says that the visa has been refused because of insufficient affidavit. We must obtain a new affidavit, and then we can make a new visa application.. No need to say anything about the state of mind I'm in. Poor Papa also will have another big disappointment! For the Reiss family, too, it was a day of misfortune: they learned that, through a new high tax and the German invasion of Denmark they are losing a large part of their fortune and are close to ruin. Mutti wrote a card from the ship.

Wednesday, April 10. Today we have calmed down somewhat and become reconciled with the situation. Lotte didn't take it so tragically; she likes it in school, but she keeps accusing me: You see, we were supposed to leave in January, and now we'll still be here in May. Yesterday I wrote to Mme. Salomon I

really wanted to take some kind of course, because living here for months without occupation would drive me crazy.

The consul evidently concluded from the fact that a welfare agency was paying for our tickets that our sponsor either was not serious about having us join him or else didn't have the money to pay for our passage, and therefore his sponsorship of us was questionable.

It is sad to reflect that such petty thinking motivated America's envoys at a time when lives were at stake, but the policy no doubt emanated from Washington. Also, the Paris Consul and his vice-consul were apparently too cowardly to tell me the bitter truth to my face and preferred to rely on the mail instead. Almost equally sad was the incompetence of the migration agency, which let us walk into the trap.

But help was on the way. There was reason not to despair. The U.S. immigration laws, which were so harsh and unbending when it came to quotas and affidavits, also made special provision for the minor children of American residents whom their parents wished to have come to the States. They were issued so-called non-quota visas, which meant that no affidavits or waiting periods were required. The parents could be trusted to be responsible for their children's support without having to prove they had a bank account. And my mother arrived in New York almost at the very moment our visa application was rejected. The first thing she did, with the help of her family, was to apply for the non-quota visas for us, so we could join her. Already on May 1 I received a copy of her letters to the Paris Consulate and to the Department of Labor (which was in charge of the Immigration and Naturalization Service) and which in turn cabled the Consulate to process our visas. On May 11 the mail brought the notice to call on the Consulate.

But this time our joy was mingled with despair about the fate of Papa, who was still in Holland which had been invaded by the German army the day before. He too had finally received his visa for the U.S. and was booked to leave Rotterdam on a Dutch vessel, the Volendam, on May 13. But the ship was sunk when the Germans bombed Rotterdam harbor on May 10, and Papa had to spend the entire war in hiding in the Netherlands..

FELIX POTIN
LUNDI 10 JUIN
St Landry.

	34	20
	24	3.5
Telegramme mama, telephone	61	55

Dieser Tag, der so glücklich begann -
wurde telegraphiert, dass von Papa gute
Nachricht kam. - und als mit der Krieger-
klärung begann. Obwohl wir seit Wochen
darauf vorbereitet waren, war es doch ein
sehr scharfer Schlag. Die Guldener d'ingen
oben drin immer weiter vor, und wir konnten
nur hoffen, wir es zu tun. Geldman zu
haben. Aber wir haben dann noch den 3.
Rein - jungen mitnehmen, um Frau Fieds
etwas zu erleichtern.

MENU

RECETTE DE PILAU MARSEILLAIS. - Faites revenir dans du
beurre ou du "Le Tip", 2 tomates, 1 oignon et 1 poireau haché; jetez-y
en remuant 1 verre de riz; lorsque il commence à jaunir, ajoutez un
bouquet garni. Faites ouvrir 2 litres de moules dans la pelle, ajoutez
au riz l'eau des moules et 1 verre et demi d'eau, sel, poivre de
Cayenne, 1 gramme de safran. Faites partir à gros bouillons 5 minutes,
cuisez un quart d'heure à feu doux. Retirez le bouquet et mélangez-y
les moules débarrassées de leurs coquilles. Servez chaud.

DÉJEUNER
PILAU MARSEILLAIS
COFFEE DE MOUTON
VERT TRÈ
POMMES FRAÎCHES
SALADE
FRUITS

FELIX POTIN
MARDI 11 JUIN
Barnabé.

	61	55
	2	60
mètre	64	15

Es ist unmöglich zu beschreiben, was ich
heute alles hinter mir habe! Morgen ging mein
Gut mehr und ich musste ein Auto anhalten, um
nach Paris zu kommen. Auf der Fahrt war
alles sehr, wie ich im Hotel war. Auch heute. Ganz
neu ist nicht mehr da, wie ich das ganz
allein. Ich ging an die Gare de Lyon, um zu bleiben
zu haben, doch es waren so viele Leute, dass ich
nicht konnte, dass ich noch 5 Minuten
warten musste. Ich hatte gerade
Märkte in der Gasse gemacht. Ich ging
nach Hause & es geschah. Ich ging
in St. Cloud mein Soufflé - Conditio Benoit mit, eine
dass ich eigentlich nicht verkaufen dürfte.
Ich und jetzt ungefähr noch die einzigen in der
Stadt, alle haben mit dem Auto.

MENU

RECETTE DE SOUFFLÉ AUX FRAMBOISES. - Mélangez
dans un verre de lait quelques cuillerées de farine fine, ajoutez-y
un à un 4 œufs bien frais; battez les blancs en neige très ferme
additionnez de sucre en poudre vanille. Faites macérer dans un verre
de liqueur de framboises; mélangez bien le tout. Beurrez le moule
à soufles, remplissez-le à moitié de votre composition, mettez-le
à four moyen et surveillez-le. Le moule doit être servi dès qu'il est
monté et bien doré.

DINER
SOUPPE FROIDE
AUX CONCOMBRES
L'AVOIR AU ROTI
HARICOTS VERTS
SOUFFLÉ
AUX FRAMBOISES

7. More Black Days

In the diary entry for April 9, the day the visas were denied to us, I called it the blackest day since our departure from Germany. But worse was still to come.

Friday, May 10. Today events rushed headlong one after another. In the morning, the radio announced that the Germans had attacked Belgium and Holland. I was devastated. Monsieur Reiss actually wept and kept saying, "Terrible, terrible!" And Papa still wrote that he was going to sail tomorrow! All communication is, of course, broken off, and he certainly won't be able to get away. We sit near the radio all day long to hear news.

Saturday, May 11. Amid all the misery and onrushing events today was a lucky day for us. The definite summons from the Consulate arrived, and there is no longer any doubt that we will be getting the visa. But our joy was not as it would have been ordinarily, since we are still unclear about Papa's fate. I phoned the Holland-America line to ask whether the boat left. They answered: we have no news, but we hope so. I was in Paris to apply for the certificates of good conduct (necessary for the exit visas)

Monday, May 13. The day started with two air raid alarms, at 1 and 6 a.m. and ended in a sort of catastrophe. At 8:30 p.m. the radio announced, that all German citizens between the ages of 17 and 55 must return to the detention camps immediately. Thank God this does not apply to M. Reiss, at least not yet, but it is a hard blow for all the refugees.

Mutti wrote us an airmail letter.

Tuesday, May 14. Today I learned to my great horror that Papa's ship did not sail, and that he is therefore still in Rotterdam. He was probably arrested; let us hope that nothing will happen to him.

The Hicem gave me the necessary money, so I could ask Lotte by telephone to come to Paris and go to the doctor with her, who took 100 francs to renew the medical certificates. (The Consulate requires a certificate of good health from an accredited doctor; ours had expired in the meantime and had to be renewed.) Monsieur Reiss wrote to the Belgian Consul and offered to take in a Belgian refugee child.

Wednesday, May 15. There was despair this morning when we heard on the radio that Holland surrendered! About Papa's fate we dare not even think.

Today we got the good conduct certificate and will go to the Hicem tomorrow.

The youngest Reiss boy had his birthday today; we gave him a chocolate bar and a little car.

Thursday, May 16. This morning I took Lotte to Paris already at 8:30, but because of the many errands for Mme. Mahieu our turn at the Hicem came only at 12:30. They were very nice and had the passports extended and reimbursed the \$2 for the visa applications with no problem. Then we ate some lunch and went to the Consulate at 2, where they told us to our great disappointment to come back tomorrow.

Friday, May 17. At the Consulate they took the papers and told us to come back Monday at 11 with the twenty dollars. Then I put Lotte on the train, so that she could still make the afternoon class, and took care of Mme. Mahieu's business.

Mme. Delmas will be leaving for Marseille tomorrow night, and I went to Paris again in the afternoon to get her tickets. The Committee sent M. Reiss 400 francs for our maintenance (at Mme. Salomon's suggestion) of which he gave me 100, for the many travel expenses because of the visas.

Saturday, May 18. Today I was again twice in Paris; in the evening I accompanied Mme. Delmas and Jean who are going to her parents in Marseille, in a taxi to the Gare de Lyon. After their train left, I looked around at the whole station

traffic: the Simplon Express happened to be there, which goes through the Balkans to Turkey....

Sunday, May 19. Mme. Weil wrote a very nice letter from Brest and enclosed ten francs.

Monday, May 20. Today was the great event, yearned for so fervently these five months: we received, without difficulties, our American visa. Now the question is: will we be able to depart six weeks from now, given the present situation?

M. Reiss went with us to the Hicem and the Consulate, where we had to wait for two hours...

They promised to arrange our ocean passage after we had the visa in hand, but the best they could come up with was a sailing on July 6 from the port of St. Nazaire on the only ship of the French line still maintaining service to New York., the s.s. *Champlain*. . "It's too bad the visas didn't come through a few days earlier," our *HICEM* case officer said. "The *Champlain* just sailed yesterday. Now you'll have to wait until July 6."

Tuesday, May 21. In the morning I went with my visa to the Hicem, where they promised to look after the passage, while I will have to get the French exit visas. I stayed the whole day for Mme. Mahieu in Paris; in the afternoon I called at Mme. Gamzon (wife of national scout commissioner, Robert Gamzon, and a community worker who took an interest in Ernest and Lotte on behalf of her colleague, Andrée Salomon.) She told me M. Reiss should register his children and us for evacuation. In the evening we were caught in Boulogne by an air raid alert and took shelter in a nearby basement. I read in a paper this evening that many Germans from Holland had arrived in France in sealed railroad cars and were imprisoned. This gave us much hope.

~~had arrived in France in sealed railroad cars and were imprisoned. This gave us~~
~~much hope.~~

Wednesday, May 22. *The whole country is in feverish excitement for days already, for the fate of the world is really at stake.* (The German army, having conquered Holland and Belgium, was now invading France from the North, bypassing the Maginot Line which was designed to resist an invasion from the East). *We are by no means safe here any more, and were rather disappointed to hear in Paris today that the children's camps are all full and we cannot be accepted any more. I wrote about this immediately to Mme. Salomon. Afterwards I went to Versailles for the exit visa, but the Prefecture was already closed.*

Thursday, May 23. *In Versailles they accepted my application; I can get the (exit) visa four days before departure. I also took along various items for the Belgian refugees which I left at the Prefecture. Mutti wrote a letter in which she enclosed five dollars she earned herself, for Mme. Reiss. Aunts Bella and Frieda each one dollar for us. Unfortunately the German lessons stopped, as the people, like many others, left for the provinces. They still owe me twenty francs.*

Friday, May 24. *Today was again a terrible day. I went in the afternoon with M. Reiss to St. Cloud, where he has to report to the police every Friday, to accompany him to Paris from there. He came out with trembling steps: they told him he would have to check into the concentration camp again tomorrow morning. What a blow! We went afterwards to Paris to see Mme. Gamzon about the evacuation of his children and us, but she cannot do anything either for the time being. She plans to visit Mme. Reiss Monday night; I should call for her. Then we went to see a man, at Mme. Salomon's recommendation, who should advise M. Reiss, but through a misunderstanding we didn't find him home. When we told Mme. Reiss the news, she was in despair.*

Saturday, May 25. *Today I accompanied M. Reiss to the camp at Maisons-*

Laffitte. He was calm, and his wife too was much calmer today. I took leave from him at the entrance to the camp and thanked him for everything, in case we should not see each other again. If only I could read what will be written on the still empty pages, for example on July 6, whether it will say, "today we sailed away," or whatever else will happen until then!

Sunday, May 26. Uncle Arthur sent a cable with reply paid for, to find out whether we got the visas or need additional documents. I cabled back, "reçu visas, depart 6 juillet." (The French authorities decreed that all cables sent abroad be written in French only. I had to hope that Uncle Arthur would find someone to translate it to him.) Charles wrote me a long letter.

Tuesday, May 28. Today was again an awful day, even though not for our own fate, but for that of the whole world, which one now takes to heart more than if it were something personal. The Belgian king has capitulated! Which of course makes the situation much worse. I am hoping all day long that Mutti, in view of the critical situation, can somehow scrape together \$400 and will cable us, we should leave via Italy. If only that country will not declare war as well. (Which it did in short order. Ernest and Lotte had no choice but to wait for the July 6 sailing from France, financed by the Hicem.)

Wednesday, May 29. We read in the paper today, that in England all German women were interned, together with the children. We are afraid, of course, that this might happen in France as well, and I wrote to Mme. Salomon to ask whether we might come to Clermont-Ferrand in that case. (If Mme. Reiss were interned). Mme. Reiss received a card from her husband; he started it with a big black dot, which means – so they had agreed – that things are very bad.

Today I thought more than ever of Papa and Mutti, as we read a story, "Thoughts about the Parental Home." Another five weeks and two days until our departure.

Thursday, May 30. *Mme. Mahieu came back for a few days, and I had to resume my frequent Paris journeys. Afterward I went to the Committee to ask if it wouldn't be possible to sail on an American ship leaving Bordeaux on June 4. Nothing doing: (1) they cannot afford the fare; and (2) it's only for Americans. Concerning Papa, they are sending me to the Red Cross, which will try to find out his address. A ray of light!*

Friday, May 31. *This morning I left at 7 to bring M. Reiss a package to the camp. When I came home, I found a letter from Mutti, with an enclosure for Mme. Salomon, in which she asked whether we couldn't sail on an American ship...*

Saturday, June 1. *Mme. Salomon wrote that, in case we had to leave here for whatever reason, we could come to her (in Clermont-Ferrand). She also enclosed a letter to the Hicem which I should read and forward to them. She inquired whether we could not leave from Marseille and requested that we should sail as soon as possible. I sent her Mutti's letter with a few words of my own. Today I was at the Mairie (town hall) to pick up our ration cards.*

Sunday, June 2. *Today I met a 17-year-old boy at the post office, who will sail tomorrow night on the Washington from Bordeaux. He is an American and has been living in Garches for six years, his parents are still staying here. He asked me if he could take something for Mutti, but I couldn't think of anything, because I just sent a letter. I was very jealous of him.*

Monday, June 3.... *Today was the first serious air raid alarm: The Germans bombed Paris for an hour and set factories on fire. Some bombs fell about 2 kilometers from here and a boy was killed.*

Tuesday, June 4. *We learned today through the paper and radio, that yesterday 240 planes dropped over 1,000 bombs and killed 50 people. In America there's supposed to be great excitement about this; I hope Mutti didn't get too upset.*

Friday, June 7. *Another day that brings us closer to our goal, that's all I can say about today. We now eat all our meals in the garden, morning, noon and night. After the meal I water the entire garden, then a half hour of steno, at 9:30 we listen to the news, and then to bed.*

Sunday, June 9. *We are very depressed by the continuing bad news which we hear on the radio. Who knows what the next few days will bring us!*

(The French army was being overrun by the German armor, and resistance was crumbling all along the front. The occupation of Paris was only days away).

Monday, June 10. *This day, which began so happily – Mutti cabled that she had good news from Papa – ended with Italy's declaration of war. Even though we expected it for weeks, it was still a hard blow. The Germans, moreover, are advancing steadily, and we are packing our suitcases to possibly travel to Mme. Salomon. We are thinking of taking the third Reiss boy along, so as to ease Mme. Reiss' burden somewhat.*

Tuesday, June 11. *It's impossible to describe all that happened to me today! In the morning there were no trains, and I had to stop a car to get to Paris. At the Hicem the offices were empty; they moved to Bordeaux. Mme. Gamzon also is gone; we are all alone. I went to the Gare de Lyon to get tickets, but there were such tremendous crowds that I had to give up after five hours' wait. I had changed \$8 for the purpose. I also applied for my sauf-conduit (certificate of good conduct) in St. Cloud, without which we supposedly cannot leave. We are just about the only ones left in the street, everybody else left in their cars.*

Wednesday, June 12. *This morning I went to the market. There were only three or four stalls; the whole town is deserted, shops shuttered. We also took the decision to leave. At noon I had to go to Versailles to pick up the American visa (with the exit visas) at the Prefecture; since all traffic was paralyzed, I had to make my way on foot.*

On the way I asked everybody whether he had a bike for sale. I found someone who was willing to lend me his for 200 francs until the end of the war. I bought various accessories, had a new tube and tire mounted, so that the price came to almost 275 francs.

At home the mood was terrible.

(For next day's entry, turn to chapter I)

8. The Flight (continued)

On June 16, we were still on the train from Vierzon, with our destination the city of Clermont-Ferrand, where we hoped to find Mme. Salomon. The diary entry reads:

Another day's travel, with changing trains and waiting 5-6 hours in the stations, spent in stoic idleness. At 10 a.m. we arrive in St. Sulpice, from there to Montluçon, where we have to wait from 9 to midnight. We drink coffee, the first warm nourishment since Thursday.

I gave up entering expenditures for this month, since I cannot remember them exactly.

Monday, June 17. At 3 in the morning we arrived in Gannat, about 40 kilometers from Clermont, but we found a train to take us there only at noon. We were furious when it stopped at a siding a few kilometers from the station, since Clermont could not absorb any more refugees. We decided to get off and march to the station on foot. A very nice lady walked along with us and helped us carry the luggage. In the end a military truck took us to Clermont-Ferrand. Mme. Salomon was delighted to see us and received us like her own children. We ate, then she went with me to the villa, where the other children from Strasbourg are lodged. I told her all kinds of things, then we went back, and I was happy to sleep again in a bed. Lotte was already asleep.

The next morning, over breakfast, Andrée, Tobie and I held a kind of war council on our next move. Andrée had read, or heard on the radio, that ships were still leaving from the port of Bordeaux, and she thought this would be our best chance to get out. If not to America, at least to England, and to the States from there. I had implicit trust in her judgment and was ready to act on her advice, without questioning. When do we leave? Wait, Andrée said. In addition to wisdom and warmth, Andrée also had authority; and connections. I'm sorry to say it, but Tobie, her husband, was a rather pale figure next to her, smoking his pipe somewhat enigmatically and not talking much. Andrée now picked up paper and pen and wrote two letters on the stationery of

the *Caisse Centrale de l'Est*, the Strasbourg Jewish welfare organization with which she was still associated. One was to the Chief Rabbi of Strasbourg, now in Bordeaux, whom she asked to extend us assistance, and the other to a Dr. Lévy-Dreyfus, a prominent Strasbourg physician also resettled in Bordeaux, whom she asked to put us up while we looked for passage. The doctor and his wife were close friends of hers, and she was sure they would receive us accordingly. I carefully tucked the two letters into the secret compartment of my knapsack where I kept the American visa (which was stamped on one sheet for both of us, with the two immigrant green cards stapled on to it), and Mme. Reiss' gold coin.

Once the decision that we should leave for Bordeaux had been taken, Andrée's business-like side took over. Letters of recommendation, provisions for the journey; checking that papers are in order, warm clothing for cold nights. It was like leaving for summer camp (for which she had also prepared me as a scout in Strasbourg less than a year earlier). I could see that her no-nonsense manner had a soothing effect on Lotte, for which I was grateful. Two days after arriving in Clermont both of us were ready for the next stage, with renewed confidence and energy. Here I again quote from the diary:

Tuesday, June 18. *Since the Germans might occupy Clermont any day, Mme. Salomon wanted us to move on to Bordeaux and to board ship there. She gave us letters to the Grand Rabbin and to the HICEM (Migration Committee) and provisions, and at 10 o'clock we left for the station. Another boy and little girl from Strasbourg went with us; to join their parents in Périgueux (city in the Dordogne, along the route). At the station there was a large crowd, and no trains were leaving. We were in despair, for we saw no possibility of getting away. Finally, at 4 p.m., a truck took us along, even though it was already chockfull. Because of the huge number of vehicles on the road, we travelled only 35 km. Until 9:30 p.m. and then slept on straw in a barn.*

Wednesday, June 19 *At 3:30 in the morning we started out again and arrived in Ussel at 11. There we changed to an overcrowded freight train, and the old routine began all over again. At 10 at night we arrived in Brive, where all had to get off. The boy who was with us spoke fluent Alsatian and became friendly with two Alsatian soldiers who helped us get in a train to Bordeaux which was meant for military personnel only, and to hide us there. I had to make believe I was Alsatian as well, and answered only curtly. Most of the time I made believe I didn't understand, so as not to give myself away.*

Thursday, June 20 *At 5 a.m. the train stopped at Perigueux, where the two others got off. For the 2 1/2 hour leg to Bordeaux it took over twelve hours. Once we got there, we went straight to the Committee. The doorman received us rather gruffly, saying the HICEM was no longer there, and the Grand-Rabbin was not receiving anyone. We stood all alone in the rain, and if we hadn't had the address of the Lévy-Dreyfus family, we would have been really desperate. So we went there, and were very touched by the cordial reception we received from them. The son had also come home from the battlefield just two hours earlier; they had already given him up for lost. We got something warm to eat; then they let us take a bath and prepared a bed for us. We fell asleep right away.*

Friday, June 21. *We consulted what we should do, since there were no more ships leaving Bordeaux for the U.S., and the HICEM had closed down. A certain Mr. Klewansky, also a refugee, advised us to continue to Lisbon, since from there ships were still sailing. He helped us to get the Portuguese visa, which was connected with quite a few problems. In the afternoon we went for a walk in the city, which had been bombed two days earlier. We saw several destroyed buildings.*

Sometimes the diary is too laconic; the format of the Felix Potin calendar no doubt forced me to be so brief. Obtaining the Portuguese visas was a bit more dramatic than the entry lets on. Marshall Petain was about to sign the armistice with the Germans, and thousands were waiting on the square in front of the Portuguese consulate, desperate for visas. There seemed to be no

hope of getting in. I did notice, though, that French army officers simply elbowed their way through the crowd and entered the building. I went back and reported this to Dr. Levy-Dreyfus, who promptly left the house and returned half an hour later with an army captain, who was a friend of his. The captain took our American visas and made his way into the consulate. Within less than an hour we had our transit visas. Then the doctor said: "You should leave right away, to try to cross Spain and get to Portugal. The Germans are going to be here in a few days."

There was one more problem. I was worried about running short of funds.

Mme. Reiss' gold coin I kept hidden deep inside my knapsack as an iron reserve. Mme.

Levy-Dreyfus had the solution. She had been the president of the Strasbourg chapter of WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization, the European equivalent of Hadassah) and as such had been entrusted with the treasury. She now poured the bills and coins on the table from the velvet purse in which she had kept the cash and started counting. It came to 224 francs, or a bit over 50 dollars. She put it back and handed me the bulging purse. I signed a receipt for the amount, on WIZO stationery. Unless we started checking into hotels, our cash problems were solved for a while.

Saturday, June 22. *We slept late, ate a good lunch, and then the youngest son drove us to the Bayonne road, about a kilometer outside of town. He waited until a car stopped for us and took us along. We drove the 175 kilometers to Bayonne in three hours. There we were able to get on the last train to the border, thanks to our visas. In the train we met a Belgian Jewish family which was also travelling to Lisbon. They offered to look after us and were very nice. At 9 p.m. we arrived in Hendaye, 300 meters from the border, where we spent the night on a chair in a hotel lobby.*

9. Crossing the Spanish Border - Twice

Sunday, June 23. *In the morning from 6 to 8:30 we stood in the rain outside a military bureau, where they put a stamp on our passport so we could leave France. After the luggage went through customs we got on a train that took us to Irun (Spanish border town). There we had to show the Spaniards our papers, and when they saw that they contained no Spanish visa, they locked us, in spite of our protests, in a sort of cage. The Belgian family felt very sorry for us, and they gave us 100 francs. We were told we only had to go to the Spanish Consul in Hendaye, there we would get our visa and could continue our journey the following day. The fellows really sent us back to France, along with about 50 other unfortunates. There the authorities were, thank God, very nice to us. We spent the night again in the same hotel.*

Monday, June 24. *To be on the safe side, we went to the Consulate already at 6 a.m. so as to be among the first, but we were number 42. At 9 o'clock we were told that, because of the measures taken by Portugal, all visas were cancelled and no new ones would be issued. We nevertheless waited outside the Consulate and were also received 3 ½ hours later. The official confirmed what we had been told. We spent the whole afternoon in the rain in front of the station, until about 7 p.m. a woman drew our attention to an American van bearing the inscription: (Foster Parents Plan) for War Children. I applied to the man, told him our story, whereupon he said: I'll take you along to our colony. We drove to Biarritz, about 30 kilometers away, and there we were very kindly received in the Villa, ate a meal and then each was assigned a bed.*

Tuesday, June 25. *There are mostly Spanish children in the colony; the staff also are Spanish, and we have trouble making ourselves understood. Biarritz is beautifully situated, has one of the best beaches in France, many luxurious hotels and elegant people. I wrote Mutti an airmail letter; the first sign of life, and asked her to send us money. The nice American consul will try to send us off with an American*

convoy, but first we should relax for a few days. We read, played ping-pong and went for walks.

Wednesday, June 26 *Today we were at the Consulate; we must wait for about a week until the Americans (repatriates) have left, then it'll be the turn of the special cases. I don't have any idea how we will pay for the trip; when somebody asks about it, I say, "I am going to cable my parents to send me the money." In the end I believe it myself. Today we were at the beach and swam in the sea, it was wonderful. Since I don't have a bathing suit, I wore a regular pair of shorts; Lotte didn't have anything and was terribly unhappy*

Thursday, June 27. *On one of our walks today we saw a car whiz by with a huge swastika on the hood and field-grey officers in it: the first Germans. Biarritz is in the occupied zone. Soon they were all over; they came with tanks and machine guns and motorcycles. But they were correct, paid for everything they bought and didn't do anyone any harm.*

Friday, June 28 *I spent the whole day at the beach and went home only for lunch. In the evening the Director told me he had spoken with the Consul, and we should try the following day to travel to Spain with the last American convoy.*

Saturday, June 29 (marked with !) *At last the longed-for day: we leave French territory for good! In the morning we leave Biarritz in a large station wagon with an American family, another man and a lady. But we were stopped on the way by the Germans, who told us that the road was closed until 4 p.m. We made it back to the colony just in time for lunch, and after a second goodbye we got started again at 3:45. At the border there were masses of Germans, women and children, Hitler Youth and B.D.M. (Bund Deutscher Maedchen = Federation of German Girls) who had come to make friends with the Spaniards. We got across all right. After having our papers*

stamped by both sides and changing money, we drove by taxi to San Sebastian, 30 minutes from the border. We slept in a small hotel.

Sunday, June 30. We had breakfast in the hotel: milk and very black bread, there is no other kind. Then we went sightseeing for an hour; the city is very modern. At 11:30 we boarded the train for Bilbao. The station was a one-story red shack, the train stands right at the door, old narrow-gage wooden carriages. A bearded old grandpa rang a rusty little bell, and the thing started moving. We rode for four hours through uncounted tunnels and the bloodiest battle fields of the Civil War; every second house is a pile of ruins. Everything gives the impression of a completely impoverished country.

In Bilbao we went into a cafe, where we met a French-speaking man who recommended an inexpensive pension to us. The two of us have a huge room; the food is excellent, but I have no appetite as I fear that, with the bad exchange rate, the money won't last. Tomorrow I plan to cable Mutti about it.

Monday, July 1. Today all our material worries were suddenly taken away. We went to the American consulate and spoke with a very nice man, who assured us that our tickets, as well as the pension and the trip to Lisbon, would be financed by the American Red Cross. Nor do I need to cable; the Red Cross will cable the parents about our arrival. Our joy knows no bounds, and we imagine Mutti's reaction on receipt of the telegram.

We wrote to all our French friends and acquaintances, who are less lucky than we, and to Mutti by air mail.

In these few brief diary entries our destiny was decided, one might say with hindsight. With a bit more hindsight, then, that Sabbath, June 28 was our journey's most fateful day, the date on which Lotte and I were able to cross the Spanish border, after a previous failed attempt, and leave German-occupied Europe forever. How did this come about? Was I really as nonchalant and even cold-blooded among those crowds of desperate Jews and others at the

border who had reason to fear being caught in the Nazi vise , as those diary entries would have it? I don't remember what mood I was in at the time although I do recall certain other details precisely, such as the hotel lobby where we slept, or the the way the train rumbled over the little bridge separating Hendaye from Irun in Spain. I suspect that I was trying to keep up a brave front for my sister's sake, and that the writing style was kept deliberately sober and sparse, perhaps because of the limited space in the calendar. There is no doubt that the discovery of the American van was a piece of sheer luck, or the kind of lucky coincidence that from time to time seemed to push the course of my life in the right direction.

The few words I devoted to the American consul in Biarritz deserve elaboration. Following upon the driver of the van who turned us over to the children's colony, and the colony's warmhearted personnel, the consul was another essential link in the chain which made our escape possible. The pre-condition, of course, was that we had American visas in our *laissez-passer*. That gave him a basis for including us in a convoy of Americans whom the Germans had agreed could cross the border into Spain as repatriates. The U.S. at that time was not yet at war with Germany, and the Germans were also willing to guarantee safe passage for a liner that was to pick up Americans from Lisbon, Portugal. A basis, yes, but no obligation. His instructions were to arrange the border crossing for American citizens, and we were not in that category. He obviously went out of his way to help two stranded children, and not without risk to himself. Had the Germans checked and found out that he was smuggling two little German Jews across the border in the guise of Americans, there might have been unpleasant consequences. I doubt whether at the time I was completely aware of the generosity and humanity of the man's action, so contrary to the conventional image of the hard-headed consul whose first, and often

only, concern is the letter of the law. Much to my regret, I did not note the Consul's name in my diary, which might have enabled me to express my gratitude to him later on.

. As for the children's colony in which we found refuge after the first aborted border crossing, it was operated by an American voluntary agency called Foster Parents Plan for War Children, whose purpose was to rescue child victims of the Spanish Civil War. The work was being financed by contributions from individuals who "adopted" specific children whose photograph and *curriculum vitae* they received in the mail, and to whose maintenance they contributed at the rate of \$15 a month. By the time we arrived at the scene that war was over, but the colony in Biarritz was still being maintained to shelter Spanish children with no family to go home to. And after World War II broke out in full force, there was no shortage of "war children" waiting to be adopted. The Plan organization expanded, and after a while needed more staff to keep track of eligible children and maintain the connection with the foster parents. One of the new secretaries taken on by the headquarters office in New York was my sister Lotte, who by then had graduated from high school.

The first week in July brought in some ways a return to the kind of normal childhood I had almost forgotten existed. Judging by the entries in the diary, attendance at a bullfight (where the guest of honor was the German general for whom the border was closed on the day we left Biarritz) or fighting against giant waves at the beach took up most of our attention, with only an occasional thought left for Mutti and Papa or for those left behind in France. The diary entries, in that week, seem to report on events in another world:

July 2. Today we spent the whole day at the beach with the boy from the pension and his Belgian foster mother, having taken food along with us. One has to ride more than an hour by tram, all along the port, where more than 60 ships of all nationalities were at anchor. Lotte had borrowed a bathing suit, and we had a great time in the giant waves.

Wednesday, July 3. *We learned at the consulate, that we'll be leaving by train for Lisbon on Sunday or Monday. There we'll be able to board the Manhattan directly. Saturday I should come back with the hotel bill. We are having a good time here, only it's a bit boring. The city we already know inside out, but we have trouble making ourselves understood. The Spaniards are, thank God, friendly and pleasing people. At 10 in the evening there was a big fireworks; altogether there seems to be no end of festivals. The day after tomorrow there is a bullfight, for which we already have reserved the seats.*

On July 6, the diary notes briefly that, instead of leaving France via St. Nazaire on that day, we found ourselves in Bilbao. Although we are not yet on the ship, as we had hoped a month ago, in another four days we should be there. It was raining, and we stayed home all day, playing cards with Manuel, the boy from the Pension, and reading.

The last diary entry reports:

Monday, July 8. *Since Lotte asked for it so insistently, I bought her a pajama. In the evening Mrs. Davis set her curls, and she now has a hairdo like a beauty queen..*

Mrs. Davis was the wife and mother of an American family evacuated from Paris who crossed the border together with us in the Biarritz consulate's station wagon. Throughout our stay in Spain, she and her husband treated us almost like her own children. It was my first contact with an American family, and I was enchanted by it. The casual but genuine warmth, the footing of respect and equality on which they met with children, the humor and affection which permeated relationships. There was no probing into the past or into our family background; only acceptance. If this was a foretaste of what America held in store for us newcomers, I was eager for more. Also, the contact with the American officials we encountered in Bilbao, both the Red Cross and consular personnel, opened up a new vista on the role of officialdom. Unlike in

France, where such encounters often took place in an atmosphere of suspicion on one side and anxiety, if not fear, on the other. Here it was all smiles and helpfulness, making one feel that the official was there to serve the citizen, especially at a time of distress. In our case, Mr. Bain, the delegate of the American Red Cross, who had been sent especially to Bilbao to organize and assist in the departure of American expatriates via Portugal, went out of his way to ease our lot. He paid for both the hotel bill and the railroad tickets (first class, the only class available on the special train to Lisbon) for which we reimbursed Red Cross headquarters in Washington when the bill was presented to us years later. He also assured us that his colleague in Lisbon would lend us the money for the steamship tickets. In the event, that turned out not to be necessary.

10. Stowaways

Manuel, the son of the owners of the Pension Baez, accompanied us to the station on the day of departure. We had become friends, and for some years to come exchanged correspondence. On the train, another member of the small group who crossed the border together in the Biarritz consulate's station wagon took a paternal interest in us. His name was Benjamin Protter, and he was a freelance journalist who had been based in Paris and was now returning to an uncertain future in his native New York. He offered to share the food he had brought along, told us a few things about American politics, and explained some of the features of the landscape we were passing through. The countryside looked withered and drought-stricken, even though it was only the beginning of summer. Everywhere there were traces of war and destruction, especially in the large cities on our route, Valladolid and Zaragoza. The trip took 30 hours, as the train made frequent and longish stops even though no passengers got off or on. Crossing into Portugal was like entering another world: smiling faces on station platforms; handsome, well cared-for houses, and many cars on the roads. Mr. Protter explained that Portugal was one of Europe's poorer countries, and yet the contrast with war-ravaged Spain was a striking one.

It was three o'clock in the morning when our train reached its destination. It had been shunted onto a special siding in Lisbon's port, and through the windows of our carriage we could see the s.s. Manhattan hulking over us, festively lit as if departing on a holiday cruise rather than on a rescue mission. My heart leaped at the sight. She was huge! The largest vessel I had ever been on (or seen) was the excursion steamer on the Rhine river on which my parents took me for a trip as a birthday present..

We walked up the gangplank straight from the train; no one asked any questions. Instead, we were served sandwiches and tea, and then led to an area where public rooms had been converted into temporary dormitories. A cot with gleaming white bedding awaited each of the passengers. We were told that these were temporary accommodations until we could arrange for our tickets at the office of the U.S. Lines in the morning

We slept in our clothes as there was nowhere to undress. The next day, Mr. Protter rode into town with us. There was another Red Cross man, Mr. Brant, at the steamship company's office, ready to advance the cost of the passage to those who did not have enough funds. Signing a form with a promise to pay back was all that was needed. I recall that the cost of a third-class ticket to New York was \$112. But in our case, there was a hitch. When Mr. Brant asked to see our passports, he was surprised and even upset. "You are Germans? For heaven's sake! The Manhattan was sent here to take Americans home. German citizens can't be allowed on this boat." He went out of the room and left us there, Lotte crying and I trying to console her. "Don't worry," I said. "We won't be stranded here." But this time I was not so sure. What worried me were rumors that the Germans would next occupy Spain and Portugal, and that the Manhattan was the last ship sent to take home American citizens.

Mr. Brant came back a few minutes later with more bad news. "I've spoken to the American consul," he reported. "Our government has assured the Germans that the Manhattan would only take on Americans; that's how she was given safe passage. We cannot take you along. But there'll be another ship. Go back on board, and come back here tomorrow with your things; we'll see what can be done." He wrote on a slip of Red Cross stationery: "Ernst and Lotte Stock are two little refugees travelling alone. Please let them sleep on board tonight "

Mr. Protter waited for us outside. He had figured that something was wrong. When I told him the story, he shook his head. "You are not leaving this ship," he said. "Just do as I tell you." When we got back to the Manhattan it was late afternoon. By then all the other passengers had arranged for their tickets and been assigned cabins, as well as places in a dining room. We had neither. But when we went aboard no one asked any questions, and on Protter's instructions we did not show the slip of paper to anyone. The cots had been removed from the lounges, and people sat around talking or reading papers. Departure was set for 11 the next morning.

It was Protter's plan that we should simply stay on board until the ship sailed, then show the slip and say we had planned to get off but realized too late that the ship was leaving the dock. Meanwhile, he stored our meager luggage in his cabin, fed us some sandwiches he had left over from the train and made room for us to sleep on the floor of his cabin.

In the morning we sneaked out into the corridor and back into the third class lounge. Again, no one paid attention to us. Protter brought us some food from the breakfast table. We enviously looked at the menu he showed us. It was a tense wait till 11 o'clock departure time; we tried to avoid people who knew us so as not to be asked embarrassing questions. We also stayed away from the dockside railing, so as not to be spotted by the company or Red Cross people who had dealt with us. Protter was the only one who was in on our secret. The Davis family were in second class and were not likely to see us. Eleven o'clock came and went, but no sign of departure. Could the Germans have reneged on their agreement for safe passage? Lotte grew pale with nervousness. At last, close to noon, the gangplanks were pulled up, the hawsers unwound and a tugboat pulled us away from the pier. The engines started, and soon we were in the midst of the wide Tajo river, with the city receding further into the distance by the minute. Not far downstream there was the Atlantic ocean. Our mood was one of jubilation mixed with

anxiety. What would happen when they discovered there were stowaways on board? Protter tried to reassure us: the ship would not turn around to take us back! But he had hardly finished the sentence when the Manhattan did stop in its tracks. A small craft, probably a police or customs cutter, pulled alongside and a man climbed up the rope ladder that was thrown down. Had they come to get us? I felt like hiding with Lotte in one of the lifeboats on the deck just behind us, but Protter held me back. We kept staring at the boat as it bobbed up and down far below. Soon the man climbed down the ladder again, the craft's motor started up and it was on its way, describing a wide arc around the Manhattan's stern, which resumed its glide toward the sea. A close call, but they obviously had not come looking for us. I could now explore the ship to my heart's content, after leaving Lotte in the lounge playing dominos with another girl.

One of my most startling discoveries – and there were many – was a door, unlocked, on one of the lower decks which led from the third class area straight to first class, without any transition. I was amazed at the opulence of the lounges there; at the wide, velvet-covered stairways, the elevators and, here and there through a half-open door, the elegant, spacious cabins. Yet the people didn't look much different than those in our part of the ship, and I wondered whether I would ever travel first class myself.

When I saw passengers enter the dining room I realized it was time to go back down to our part of the ship and consult Mr. Protter about the next move. I slipped through the secret passageway and found my way back to the third class lounge without difficulty. But Lotte wasn't there. Instead, the girl she'd been playing dominos with jumped up when she saw me coming, as though she'd been waiting for me. "Your sister got sick and threw up!" she exclaimed. "My parents wanted to take her to your cabin, but she didn't know the number. So they took her to lie down in our room. You'd better go down there!" I thanked her and turned

around to look for Mr. Protter instead. Could Lotte have gotten sea-sick already? The rolling of the ship was barely noticeable.

When I told Protter what happened he decided it was time to turn ourselves in. "I would have liked to wait a bit longer till we're in the open sea, but you need a cabin of your own," he said. Then he took me to the Chief Purser's office, which was on the upper deck, close to the captain's quarters. "This boy and his sister were supposed to get off the ship this morning, but they were playing around till past sailing time," Protter told the Chief Purser. The man's weatherbeaten face was grave. He looked at me sternly, but I thought I could see a twinkle in his eye. "Tell me what happened," he turned to me. I more or less confirmed Protter's story, with a few embellishments, and showed him the slip from the Red Cross. The main thing, I told him that we had American visas, and that my mother was waiting in New York and would pay for our passage. "We'll find a cabin for you," was his verdict. "And now you better get some lunch." To Protter he said, "The whole thing is damned unpleasant for us. We had strict orders from Washington to take only American citizens."

The six days we spent on the ship made for a welcome transition from Europe to America, a preparation for life not just on another continent, but almost on a different planet. Not only geographically, but temperamentally, psychologically, and in many other ways. Once we were legitimized, assigned a cabin, and assigned to a table at the first sitting in the third-class dining room, we had suddenly left behind the sense of danger lurking behind almost every corner, of being pursued by an implacable enemy, that was the lot of a Jew, no matter how young, on the European continent. That feeling didn't leave us even after finding safety in Spain and then in Portugal, as we couldn't

escape the speculation that the Germans might decide to invade the Iberian peninsula and thus catch up with us. But once we were permitted to join the carefree life on board ship, all that was far behind. Games, sports, movies (I remember seeing "Anne of Green Gables," with Ann Sheridan in the ship's theater) but then life itself had suddenly become like an American movie. If the choices we were presented with on the menu card by white-jacketed waiters made up third-class dining, then what must second and first class be like? . There was also gambling: one of the friendly adults at our table had staked me to some coins so I could try my luck with the "one armed bandits" that tempted the passengers. Thanks to three oranges I arrived in New York feeling rich, with a pocketful of quarters. I also learned that there was a more austere side to America: gambling was forbidden in New York state, and the pinball machines were all covered up when the ship reached the three-mile territorial limit.

But by the time the New York skyline and the Statue of Liberty came in sight all our thoughts were focussed on the reunion with Mutti. We had wired her from the ship about our arrival, and she was waiting for us at the pier. Would we be able to spot her among the crowd? Or she us, high up on deck along the rail? The closer the ship drew to its berth the louder our hearts beat with excitement. And a bit of apprehension. . It was only a year and a half since we parted from her, but how much we changed in that time. Perhaps Mutti too. Would we three still get along together? As for Lotte, since I picked her up in Thann on the way to Vaucresson at the outbreak of the war, she and I had grown much closer to one another. We had been together every single day since that time, and the feeling of responsibility I felt for her made me take much more of an interest in her changing moods and emotions, little joys and suffering. She

in turn had learned to talk with me, tell me what was bothering her. Yet I was glad Mutti was about to take over her rightful functions again, releasing me from a burden.

Yes, we spotted her on the pier below even before the ship made fast, and we could see that she had tears streaming down her face when she saw us. The two of us were also crying (at last!) and just waved and waved. But there was one more hitch: we were not allowed to debark with the rest of the passengers until our status was cleared up and the tickets paid for. The immigration officers who came on board decided to send us to Ellis Island, the place in New York Harbor where illegal immigrants were being detained ever since the 19th century. By the time this decision was reached it was late afternoon, and the Ellis Island ferry had stopped running, so we had to spend another night on the Manhattan. When we shouted this news to Mutti, who was by now waiting all by herself on the pier side, she was disconsolate. To be so near to her children and yet unable to hold them close! But then a little miracle happened. An official of the shipping line (or the immigration service, I don't recall which) decided that Mutti should be allowed to board the ship and spend the night with us. I can only think of well-worn cliches to describe our reunion, so I won't attempt it. The icing on the cake was that we were moved, all three of us, to a first-class cabin, where an impeccably uniformed steward saw to it that all our needs were taken care of. Even a room-service dinner was provided. Although the ship was lying at anchor and we were the only passengers, I had realized my ambition to travel first class much earlier than I could have dreamt.

The next morning my mother went to the offices of the United States Lines at One Broadway, to pay for our passage, while we were taken to Ellis Island to be detained. But it was just a formality. When my mother appeared with proof that the tickets were paid for, we were no

longer stowaways but legal non-quota immigrants. Our visas were stamped “Admitted” and we were free to go. The date was July 19, 1940.

Mutti still had her diary. She made an entry in it on that day: (translation from the German)

The happiest night of my life was the night of July 18 – 19 which I spent on the ship Manhattan together with my newly found children. O God, how my heart pounded, it was as though I had borne them anew. Grown-up Ernst and little Lotte – the story of their emigration the children wrote all by themselves.

11. Papa

The joy of being reunited with Mother was mingled with sadness over the fate of my father, who remained behind in Nazi-occupied Holland. If we had known at this point that the separation would last six more years, the sadness would have turned to despair. Yet we were also lucky: most of the Jews living in Holland when the war broke out perished in the death camps.

The pity of it was that Papa had come so close to following in the path of Mutti, who passed through Holland on her way from Frankfurt to New York in March 1940. But his American visa came through only a few weeks after that, and so he had to see her off as she left alone on the Dutch liner Volendam sailing from Rotterdam for New York. When he at last received his visa, he booked passage for himself on the s.s. Veendam, due to leave from the same port on May 13. Then the German invasion of Holland on May 10, 1940 put an end to his plans. Rotterdam was levelled by German bombers; the Veendam suffered a direct hit and sank at her pier. Fortunately, the passengers hadn't boarded yet, but a good part of the Stock family household went to the bottom with her. My mother had used the final weeks of her stay in Frankfurt to prepare our furniture and other possessions for shipment to New York; it was all packed in a big lift van and sent by train to Rotterdam, to be sent off on the same ship on which Papa was to sail. In those days the Germans still let Jewish emigrants take their household goods with them, and most families arrived at their overseas destinations together with their furnishings. After Britain and France declared war on Germany in September 1939 there was no longer any direct sea-borne traffic with the U.S., but transshipments continued by way of neutral Holland, until the day the Germans occupied it. But since Germany was not at war with the United States

until December 1941, mail service was still functioning between the two countries and Nazi-occupied Europe (I don't know by what circuitous route). Which meant that we were able to keep in touch with Papa by from America by correspondence. In the beginning, his letters were hopeful and optimistic; he rejoiced with us in our little successes and triumphs in adjusting to the new country, and also tried to play his part in his children's education by giving encouragement and fatherly advice. The three of us – Mutti, Lotte and myself – reported to him regularly on our daily routine and special experiences. All this came to an end with Pearl Harbor and the U.S. declaration of war on Germany: a letter Lotte and I wrote to Holland on December 7, 1941 came back stamped "Undeliverable." For more than a year after that, all contact with Papa was cut off, only in 1943 did brief messages get through via the International Red Cross. By then Papa, in hiding, was using an assumed name to write on the Red Cross form, but his handwriting was clearly recognizable.

When the Nazis began rounding up Dutch Jews for deportation, Papa had gone underground, meaning he disappeared from the address where he was registered with the authorities and moved in with an elderly couple in the city of Utrecht, where no one knew him. Just how he got to these remarkable people, who not only treated him like a family member and shared everything they had with him for three years, but also took a grave risk by hiding him, I don't recall. There could have been a secret register of Dutch families willing to take in Jews, or he may have been referred to the Kinkhorsts by friends. The fact is that most Jews who were thus hidden by Dutch host families were saved, while of the tens of thousands of others who dutifully reported at assembly stations when their names appeared on the list, few survived.

My father was too restless to spend months on end hiding in his hosts' small apartment at No. 2 Weerdsingel, next to the canal. He ventured out from time to time for a breath of fresh air

or to make small purchases. On one such excursion he was stopped by two Gestapo agents who asked him to accompany them to headquarters for identification. Papa did not lose his cool. He had been given false identity papers for just such an eventuality. Flaunting them, he turned on the Gestapo men: "Aren't you ashamed of yourselves interfering with a German citizen, who came here to do business, not to be molested by the likes of you!" Looking for local Dutch Jews, the Gestapo agents were unprepared for my father's Frankfurt dialect. They believed his story and, somewhat sheepishly, let him go. He had to promise his hosts not to take any more unnecessary chances and, by staying in his hiding place, managed to escape the increasingly ruthless deportations.

Even without leaving the house, Papa led an active social life through the Kinkhorst's family and friends who came to visit. He learned to speak Dutch, and with his lively sense of humor, became a popular member of the household. In the darkest days of the war he forged some lasting friendships. Perhaps one reason he got on so well was that, from his earliest youth, my father had always had non-Jewish friends and acquaintances. He and his older brother Salomon had been active in the Eberstadt *Turn Verein* (Athletic Association) in which they were the only two Jewish members. But while in Germany the contact with non-Jews, no matter how close, usually carried with it a whiff of anti-semitism (or a slight disdain for the Jewish partner) among the Dutch there was a genuine respect for Jewish people as Jews, the people of the Book. When I called on the Kinkhorst couple on a visit from Israel many years later, I was surprised by their knowledge of Biblical Israel, and even more by their interest in its modern successor state. They could not hear enough details from me about daily life in the country; the topography, the kibbutz and the cities. It was not the expression of a naive fundamentalism, but of a much more intellect-driven faith in which the returning Jews were an indispensable instrument in the scheme

of redemption. Their most fervent wish was to be able to see Israel for themselves; although ever since arthritis had forced Hendryk Kinkhorst to give up his trade as a watchmaker, they were resigned that this was not within their means.

I believe that one reason Papa got on so well with his Dutch hosts was his origin in rural Germany. His family were *Landsjuden*, country Jews, as their citified cousins somewhat disdainfully called them. It is true that they were less educated than those who grew up in the cities; only very few youngsters, like cousin Hugo Heyum, went on to high school and to teachers' seminary or university.. But their Jewishness was less complex, more taken for granted, and at one with their environment. The thirty or forty Jewish families in a small town like Eberstadt were an integral part of the population, just as the synagogue belonged by right in the center of the village. When, in 1913, it was time to replace the centuries-old building with a new structure, the mayor himself signed the fund-raising appeal. The relationship between Jewish community and the non-Jewish population in Eberstadt was probably as close as anywhere in Germany, yet there's no denying that the whiff of anti-semitism I mentioned earlier was part of it. The strange customs to which the Jews clung with such tenacity, such as not riding or working on the Sabbath and going instead to synagogue carrying the velvet blue *tallis* (prayer shawl) bag when everyone else observed their day of rest on Sunday, kept the Jews permanently a group apart on the level of family and folk.

According to cousin Hugo Heyum, who was somewhat of an amateur historian, the family's connection with Eberstadt in the 17th century has its origin in an anti-semitic incident. (The maiden name of Papa's mother was Heyum). In an essay, "About the Heyums," which he wrote in 1978 and of which he gave me a copy, Hugo writes:

"The first Salomon Heyum, whom I assume is one of our forebears, was living at Eschollbruecken, a little hamlet 3 ½ miles to the west of Eberstadt. Both villages belonged

to the Landsgrafschaft (principality) Hessen-Darmstadt. The year was the early 1620's, and anti-semitism was rife in German lands. At Frankfurt the Fettmilch riots a few years earlier cost many Jewish lives, at Worms at the same time numerous Jews lost theirs in the uproar of the mobs of the trade organizations. They were indebted to Jews, and at Darmstadt the reigning Landgraf banished the Jews from his capital.

At Eschollbruecken, Jew Salomon Heyum's cow that before was grazing placidly with all the other non-Jewish owned cows on the village common pasture (Allmend) was no longer allowed on the common village pasture. Salomon Heyum complained in a petition to the government in Darmstadt. And the outcome was his moving to Eberstadt, suggested by the authority.

Papa's encounter with the Gestapo was a typical manifestation of a trait in his character of which I was aware from early childhood, the kind of courage which has in it several parts of *chutzpah*. In retrospect, his refusal to leave Germany may have stemmed from the same trait of defiance rather than from meekness (he was quiet and retiring in company, never loud and assertive); he simply refused to accept the Nazi edict that there was no place for Jews in Germany. From his childhood and youth in Eberstadt, he knew in his bones that there *was* a rightful place for them in that kind of German society, and he would not let any brown-shirted rabble deprive him of it. One day, when I was seven or eight and was alone in the house, I gathered up enough courage myself to open the drawer in Papa's night table to see what he kept there. The most puzzling find was a small blue and yellow box labelled "Fromm's Akt" containing a set of strange-looking rubber rings, such as I had never seen before. The second, more ominous discovery was a revolver with a drum meant to hold six bullets, the like of which I had only seen in the movies. The drum appeared to be empty, but it was impossible to tell whether or not there was a bullet in the slot opposite the barrel. I preferred not to check further into it. The third item I came across in the drawer was a cudgel, or clout, of the type used by

police to quell demonstrations. It was covered with leather, flexible, with a small steel ball at the end opposite the sling which served as a handle. I could imagine easily how it would be swung to land on someone's head and crack his skull. What I could not imagine was what possible use Papa had for these weapons. I obviously could not ask him at this point, as I would have to admit that I was rummaging through his drawer. But there came a time when he told me why he kept the weapons. We lived in a ground-floor flat, and one had to be prepared against intruders. I had the impression that this included the brown shirts as well; though when they did come for him on Crystal Night we no longer lived on the ground floor, and he did not make use of his weapons.

The sense of humor which helped Papa overcome such grim situations was also behind his love of practical jokes. Mutti learned about this the hard way even before they were married. She was sometimes late for their dates, and kept him waiting at one of the round pillars for advertisements and announcements that are a feature of German cities. When he saw her approaching, he slouched to the other side of the pillar, and kept a few steps behind her as she circled around it, looking nervously at her watch. Before she gave up the wait in despair, he turned around and they bumped into each other. It cured her of her habit of being late. Many years later, well into the Nazi period, she once told him she was worried about not getting any mail from her sisters in America. Papa took an old letter, re-sealed the envelope and put it into our mailbox. Mutti found it there the next morning and, thinking it was new mail, could hardly contain her joy. But when she began reading, a puzzled look came over her face: it all seemed so familiar! Papa's face was beetle-red with suppressed laughter.

Papa and I sometimes differed about what was funny.. Sex, for example, was

not a subject for jokes, at least not for us children. I not only did not recognize the condoms when I opened his drawer, at age six or seven I had only the vaguest knowledge about more elementary matters. The main source of information was an illustrated book my mother gave me about how babies are born. It was very beautiful and poetic in language (I still have it) but very uninformative when it came to the nitty-gritty. The older boys with whom I played in the street decided one day to take advantage of my ignorance and taught me a question I was to ask my father at table: "Papa, did you fuck your wife today?" I had hardly opened my mouth when I got such a resounding slap in the face I almost fell off the chair.

This kind of physical punishment was part of every boy's upbringing in those days: I don't believe that I ever protested when my cheek burned from a slap (called *Ohrfeige* or ear fig in German). But rather I felt that I had it coming and rubbed my cheek quietly. There were many other occasions when I deserved – and received – a fig on the ear. I recall two of them: In 1932 there were general elections and the *Helmholtz-Schule* (high school) which was just around the corner from us served as a polling station. The boys in my block, myself included, distributed flyers on the steps of the school, with the name of the party to vote for. I later brought some of the flyers home with me. It said Vote for No. 8 – *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partiei* (the Nazi Party).. Even aside from being Jewish, I should have known better, because I had accompanied Papa to a mass rally of the SPD (German Socialist Party) in the *Ostpark* only a week earlier.

Number two: Soon after the Nazis came to power, my father closed down his business and there was real penury in the house. I was nine years old at the time and did not notice much about it, but I did realize that our telephone was cut off because we could no longer pay the bills. However, the line remained in the apartment, running along the bottom molding of the walls. In

those days the wires were embedded in a lead casing. It so happened that I had a passionate interest in lead soldiers at the time, playing for hours with my friend Carlo from upstairs with dozens of the brightly colored figures on the floor. To save money, we stopped purchasing the soldiers in toy shops after a while but instead bought a form in which we could produce the soldiers ourselves, and then paint them.. All we needed was some lead, to be melted down on the gas flame. I believe it was Carlo who pointed out to me that our phone line was no longer needed, and it was easy to pry it from the wall. I don't recall whether we ever played with these soldiers; I do recall how furious my father was when he asked the telephone company to reconnect the phone, and there was no cable.

Just a decade after these childish pranks the spotlight shifts to another scene entirely. It is May 13, 1945, a few days after V-E Day, the Germans in Holland have surrendered, as elsewhere in Europe, and a U.S. army jeep with a couple of GIs on board is riding back and forth on some Utrecht streets, near the canal. Here and there people stare at the two soldiers; with their Eisenhower jackets and round steel helmets they are the first Americans seen in this part of Holland, where only British and Canadian troops have been stationed. The two are looking for Leo Stock, but not at Weerdsingel No 2, where he lives with the Kinkhorsts. No, he didn't write his real return address on those Red Cross messages he sent to his family, but another name and address, which the soldiers are looking for now. How did they learn about it? One of them held the Red Cross form in front of him, reading from it, while the other, taller one steered the jeep. The one with the letter was me. I saw my father sitting inside a ground floor window at the street address on the form. We stopped the jeep, and I got out. He looked at me with curiosity. He was

81

much thinner than I remembered him. I took off the steel helmet and said to him:

“Papa, kennst Du mich nicht?” *Papa, don't you know me?*

Let's leave the last word to Papa. This is the letter he wrote to my mother, sister (and grandfather) describing our reunion: (*translated from the German*)

Mother's Day, May 13, 1945

My dearest, dearest Julie, dear Lottchen, and all dear ones, especially Opa!

It is a long time ago that Heinrich Hirsch [*brother-in-law killed in Auschwitz*] said to me, “There are no Nissim (miracles)!” Oh how wrong he was! Today I lived through a miracle! Unexpected, sensational, dramatic! Like an appearance from another world an American soldier comes driving up (the first one I got to see in this war) and called out: “Don't you know me?” No, I didn't know him. And yet! It was he, my boy, one of the three human beings around whom my thoughts revolved in the daytime and my dreams by night; one of the three who lent me the strength and the energy to live through the past few years. But this must not turn into a letter of lament either what concerns myself or the fate of millions of others. Joy, gratitude, happiness – let us now feel nothing else. Let us forget the past for a bit and look forward to the happier days that lie ahead of us. You want to ask a thousand questions, I know! There will be lovely hours together in which to *schmuss* and to tell. For today only the following: Ernst will confirm to you, that I've remained the same in every respect.

Healthy, not having been sick for even a day, well dressed and well nourished (not having suffered hunger), never lost my nerves, and in spite of many excitements only today had the first sleepless night! Talked and talked until two in the morning and then I couldn't sleep for joy. Then I read your wonderful letter for the nth time and many of your letters to Ernst. Oh, what an amazing person you are, what a proud mother, in love with your children. And I had to leave all the care, all the joys and all the happiness over the children to you alone, during all those terribly long years! How I envy you and how I feel sorry for you, because I know that my absence was like an open wound for you during those years. But now this wound will heal, and never shall any power on earth keep us apart for even a single day! As it's written in the Bible:

seven (long, long) years did I serve for you. But the prize which awaited me was worth the endurance. I never longed for you as much as on this day, and never did a man love his wife as much as I do the mother of my wonderful children, my dear, dear Julchen

A P P E N D I X (List of Documents)

- 1. Postcard sent by Leo Stock to his wife from Buchenwald concentration camp, and certificate of entitlement to World War I “Purple Heart” which brought about his release**
- 2. Letter from Willy Reiss to his friend Martin Marx, the children’s uncle, informing him that he is ready to take Ernest and Lotte into his home in Vaucresson.**
- 3. On April 1, 1940 Ernest writes to his mother, in transit in Holland from Germany to America, expecting an early reunion. On April 2, the U.S. Consul in Paris informs him that his U.S.visa application had been denied.**
- 4. Postcard Leo Stock wrote to the children from Rotterdam on 8 May 40, informing them that he is about to embark for New York. But on May 10 the Germans invaded Holland and then bombed Rotterdam, sinking the ship.**
- 5. Temporary identity document issued to Ernest by French police. He had to report to the police station every month, but because he was under 16 avoided internment as an enemy alien.**
- 6. The American immigration visa, issued by Paris embassy on May 20, 1940**
- 7. and, on back of it, various exit and transit visas**
- 8. Telegram sent by American Red Cross in Bilbao announcing the children’s imminent arrival in New York**
- 9. One year later: The U.S. State Department collects the debt incurred by the children in Spain**
- 10. Five years later: the N.Y. Times reports that Ernest found his father in Holland, where he spent the war in hiding.**

Meine genaue Anschrift:

Schachthilling

Nr. 274

Wohnort

König-L. Buchenwald
Post Weimar / Thür.

König-L. Buchenwald
Buchenwald
Post Weimar / Thür.

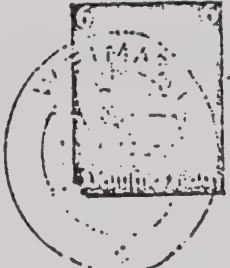
Nutzung aus der Lagerordnung:

Jeder Häftling darf im Monat 2 Briefe oder 2 Postkarten empfangen und auch absenden. Die Briefseiten müssen überschüssig und gut lesbar sein. Postsendungen, die diesen Anforderungen nicht entsprechen, werden nicht zugestellt bzw. beiseite. Briefe jeglichen Inhalts dürfen nicht empfangen werden. Geldsendungen sind zulässig; es kann im Lager alles gekauft werden. Zeitungen dürfen nicht mehr unter Streifenband g. h. werden, sondern müssen bei der Postanweisung beschriftet werden. Briefe dürfen nur durch Postanweisung zugestellt werden.

Der Lagerkommandant.

Postnummer und
Sendung ohne Nummer

Ein Post
hilft sich selbst



Ernst Thälmann
Hans Thälmann
Hans Thälmann

Berechtigungsausweis

Der Kaufmann Leonold Stock

(wähler Beruf)

in Frankfurt a.M., Hauptstr. 35

ist berechtigt, das

Verwundetennabzeichen

Heeresangehörige

~~Heeresangehörige~~

zu tragen.

Frankfurt a. M.

Den 2. September



Verorgungsamt

Frankfurt a.M.

Im Auftrag

Handwritten signature

REISS

Vaucresson (S.&O.), den 2. Mai 1939
37, Allée St. Cucufa

Sehr geehrter Herr Marx,

Ihre beiden freundlichen Karten habe ich erhalten,
und danke Ihnen verbindlichst für Ihre Mitteilungen über
Ihre Familie in Strassburg.

Wie ich Ihnen bereits schrieb, sind uns die jungen
Herrschaften willkommen, und wir würden uns glücklich schät-
zen gegebenenfalls Elternstelle an ihnen zu vertreten. An den
jungen Herrn Stock haben wir geschrieben.

PARIS, France, le 2 Avril, 1940

Monsieur Ernst Stock et
Mademoiselle Lotte Stock
Vaucresson S. et O.

Monsieur et Mademoiselle,

Vous trouverez ci-inclus les Documents que vous avez déposés au Consulat Général à l'appui de votre demande de visa d'émigration. Tous les autres documents que vous avez présentés sont désormais partie des archives officielles du gouvernement. La commission d'étrois consuls chargée de l'examen de vos documents a l'obligation de vous refuser le visa d'immigration pour les raisons suivantes:

Les preuves financières insuffisantes établissant que vous ne tomberez pas à la charge de l'état.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Taylor W. Gannett

1. April 1940

Siebeste Mutti!

In der Erwartung, täglich das erlösende Telegramm zu bekommen, daß uns keine Wiedervereinigung mit dem lieben Papa anzeigen wird, fange ich an, Dir nach Holland zu schreiben und kommt es mir fast so vor, als ob wir Dich schon in die Arme schließen können, da der entscheidende Schritt über die Grenze in die Zivilisation endlich gemacht ist. Aber wir wollen damit nicht ein letztes Leiden warten müssen, sondern tun wir das gerne, weil wir wissen, daß Du und Papa in Sicherheit seid und uns bestimmt bald in unsern neuen Heimat empfangen werdet.

Die diese Zeiten persönlich nach Holland schreiben zu können, das war schon seit Monaten unser schärfster Wunsch, und kannst Du Dir denken, wie glücklich wir sind, es nun endlich tun zu können, es entschädigt uns für viele bisherige Aufschreibungen und Enttäuschungen. -

Freitag, den 8. 5. 40

Liebe Kinder! Soeben eben hier Brief v. 6. 5.
(von Frau Liman) mit allen Einlagen, welche ich
noch nicht gesehen habe, weil ich diese Karte gleich
hin fort geben will. Es müssen 2 Sendungen von mir
nicht angestrichen sein. Ohnehin, dann 2 neue Karte
ich noch nicht gesehen. Ich bringe von C. heute
den Brief mit dem Brief von der Karte. Ich bringe
gleich. Heute hat sich nicht nur alle Anforderungen auf
dem angefordert. Klappen sind so und fallen. Ich
bin heute ich bringe heute abend, d. h. es ist
da die Sendung und Freitagabend, 8. 5. 40
nicht das Blatt. Es ist heute und von
Post, wenn ich nicht gleich nach Hause bin. So bin
ich nicht das ich den Brief nicht abgeben werde. 2 Karten
an Goldstein haben erhalten. Ich habe 1 x persönlich
den Brief direkt. Und immer hier 1 Karte an Frau Liman

En échange d'un récépissé délivré à Strasbourg le 38-7-39.



REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

0020

RÉCÉPISSÉ

DE DEMANDE DE CARTE D'IDENTITÉ

Renouvellement de la carte N°

M. (1)

Ernest
Ernest
Ernest

Nationalité *Allemande*

Résident à *Strasbourg*

Profession *Comptable*

Présent récépissé, valable jusqu'au 30 septembre 1939

Le 30 septembre 1939

A *Strasbourg*, le 30 août 1939

N° de récépissé

Date de récépissé

Pénalités versées

Nombre de mois

Numéro du reçu

Date de la poste

Co récépissé ne saurait aucun

Tout étranger changeant de domicile sans esprit de retour (ou quittant la France dans les mêmes conditions) devra, avant son départ, faire viser son récépissé par le Commissaire de police (ou, à son défaut, par le Maire).
Dans les 48 heures de son arrivée au lieu de son nouveau domicile (ou, à son défaut, de police (ou, à défaut, par le Maire).
L'étranger qui négligera de se conformer à ces prescriptions sera passible des peines prévues par l'article 471, § 15, du Code pénal.

(1) Nom et prénoms: Pour les femmes mariées, mentionner le nom de jeune fille, après celui du mari.



23 DEC 1939

27 OCT 1939

30 AOÛT 1939

24 NOV 1939

18 JAN 1940

18 FEV 1940

16 AVR 1940

17 MAI 1940

16 JUIN 1940

REPUBLIC OF FRANCE
CITY OF PARIS
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

SS

AFFIDAVIT TO BE USED IN LIEU OF A PASSPORT

I, the undersigned, being duly sworn depose and say;

That my name is Ernst STOCK and that I was born on August 6, 1924 at Frankfort-on-Main, Germany;

That I am accompanied by my sister whose name is Lotte STOCK and who was born on January 12, 1928 at Frankfort-on-Main, Germany;

That we both possess German Children's Passports which cannot be validated for immigration to the United States and that we have been unable to secure a travel document from the French Authorities valid for travel to the United States;

That in consequence this affidavit has been executed to serve us in lieu of a passport to allow us to proceed to the United States of America.

Photographic likeness of Ernst Stock:



Ernst Stock
Ernst STOCK

Lotte Stock
Lotte STOCK

Photographic likeness of Lotte STOCK:



Personal description of Ernst STOCK : and Lotte STOCK

Height 5 ft. 2in
Hair dark brown
Eyes brown
Distinguishing marks: nil

Height 4ft. 8in
Hair dark brown
Eyes brown
Distinguishing marks: nil

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of May 1940

PARIS, FRANCE

Herman

Quota Immigration Visa No. -7960-
Issued to *Ernst Stock*
(same)
This *20th* day of *May* 1940
(Seal)
No Charge
Taylor W. Gannett
American Consul

TAYLOR W. GANNETT

Vice Consul of the United States

of America at Paris, France

IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD

1177190

ISSUED

MAY 20 1940

PARIS, FRANCE

Herman

Quota Immigration Visa No. -17421-
Issued to *Latte Stock*
(same)
This *20th* day of *May* 1940
(Seal)
No Charge
Taylor W. Gannett
American Consul

TAYLOR W. GANNETT

Vice Consul of the United States

of America at Paris, France

IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD

1177191

ISSUED

MAY 20 1940

FEE No. 2971



Versailles, le 12 JUN 1940

Pour le Prison

Secrétaire Général pour la Police

W. Gannett

VU à la Préfecture de SEINE-et-OISE

pour se rendre de France en Italie... par le poste frontière de...

A utiliser dans les jours qui

suivent la délivrance du présent visa

garantie de retour en France

(Autorisation du Général Commandant)

Région de Paris en date du *12 Juin 1940*

- Visto neste Consulado de Portugal em Bordéus, aos 22 de Junho 1940.
Válido para uma só viagem para Portugal.



be Rahn
H. Gannett

Pagou ao câmbio de 1,60 a quantia
de 1,80, 8.0... da Tabela ficando
esta importância lançada no livro de receita sob
número 2296

Consulado de Portugal em Bordéus, aos
22 de Junho de 1940



29. June
1400 hr

POLICIA	Fuentes de...
	10. JUN 1940
	SALIDA

DELEGACION DE LA

SECTOR DEL BIDASOA

Autorized for transit por Euzkadi

Pilbar

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cable-gram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

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FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS
DL - Day Letter
NL - Night Letter
LC - Deferred Cable
NLT - Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

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J115CC 9C VIA RCA

CD BILAO 20 1 VIA RCA IMPERIAL

NLT LEOPOLD STOCK

AS

THREE THIRTYSIX FOR WASHINGTON AVENUE NEWYORK

ERNEST AND LOTTE SAFE RETURNING NEWYORK SS MANHATTAN

AMERICAN RED CROSS

118140 Hcnra 1111



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to
DA-D

AUG 8 1941

Mr. Ernest Stock,
Care of Mr. Leopold Stock,
336 Fort Washington Avenue,
New York, New York.

Sir:

The American Ambassador at Madrid, Spain, under date of July 8, 1940, made an advance to you in the amount of \$17.12 for the transportation of you and your sister from Bilbao to the Portuguese border, in connection with your repatriation to the United States, and for which you executed a promissory note now held for collection by this Department.

In accordance with the terms of the note a check or money order, drawn payable to the order of the Secretary of State of the United States, should be forwarded to this office promptly in liquidation of this indebtedness. Upon receipt of payment your promissory note will be canceled and returned to you.

Very truly yours,

D. W. Corrick
Chief, Division of Accounts

STORY OF
ERNEST & LEO STOCK
1945

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 1945

U. S. SOLDIER FINDS FATHER IN HOLLAND

Family Was Separated in Its
Native Germany in 1938,
When Nazis Seized Parent

On Mother's Day a jeep with two American soldiers rolled into Utrecht, Holland. As one of those Yanks recorded it:

"We stopped, and I saw Papa sitting at a ground-floor window, looking out into the street and at our jeep. I got out and said to him, 'Kennst Du mich denn nicht, Papa?' and he said, 'Nee, ich kenn Dicht nicht.' I told him who I was, but he still couldn't grasp it, and only when I was inside did he realize it was his son. You can imagine how he kissed me and hugged me then."

Mrs. Julia Stock, a slight, dark-haired woman, who was holding the letter from her son, Ernest, let it drop to her lap and closed her eyes as if trying to visualize the meeting. It was late afternoon yesterday in her small but tidy apartment at 715 West 170th Street.

"It's been seven long years," she explained, "and at last our family is again reunited. Soon, I hope, my husband will join us here to live in this wonderful country."

Trouble beset the Stocks back in 1938. Leo Stock was a prosperous wholesale food dealer. He lived with his wife and two children, Ernest, who was then 13, and Charlotte, who was 10, in Frankfurt on the Main. Ernest, an intelligent, studious youth, understood the coming turmoil and wanted to go to America. But Mr. Stock insisted his family stay together in Frankfurt.

Seized by the Gestapo

Then one night Gestapo agents broke into the Stocks' apartment and whisked away Mr. Stock because he was a Jew. They took him to the Buchenwald concentration camp and kept him there six weeks.

The two children, with their mother's permission, went to a friend's home in Alsace. A week before war was declared by France they went to live with another family in Paris. Just before Paris fell the children took their bicycles and hit the road. Three weeks later they arrived in Portugal, hungry and without funds.

They stowed away aboard the liner Manhattan, the last American vessel to take back citizens to the United States. The children mingled with the other passengers and at night slept in an unoccupied stateroom. The third day out

Amsterdam at that time, but was able to talk his way free, saying he was wounded three times in the last war. Since then nobody knew he was Jewish, and he was practically the only one who dared go out in the street, get food for the others. . . . He says if it wasn't for the wonderful helpfulness of the Dutch people there wouldn't be a single Jew left up there."

Ernest said he wanted his father to return with him to Brussels, where he is stationed, but Mr. Stock wanted to stay in Holland until he could come to America.

Mr. Stock also wrote to his wife. He said:

"An intelligent young boy left

Germany in September, 1938; a man symbolic of representative, democratic, freedom-loving America returned to his father."

Mr. Stock said the thoughts of once more being reunited with his loved ones gave him the will to live during his exile. He added: "I just want to move once more in my life and that very quickly, as soon as possible, and that is to New York."

Your waste paper will buy extra comforts for wounded Veterans and speed Victory. Save yours and ask school children, Boy Scouts and P.A.L.'s about the V-V Waste Paper Program.

McCREER

34th Street and 5th Avenue

Wisconsin 7-7000

Happy

June, July,
Three months
Happy days



